

The Influence of Membership Diversity on Performance of CBO projects in Kaptembwo Informal settlement area in Nakuru city.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100800267>

Received: 05 August 2026; Accepted: 10 August 2026; Published: 01 September 2026

ABSTRACT

Membership diversity continues to be recognized as a critical determinant of the effectiveness of community-based organizations (CBOs), especially in informal urban settlements where collective action is a key pillar for community development. Nonetheless, evidence on how diversity influences the performance of CBO-supported projects remains underexplored. This study examined how membership diversity influenced performance of CBO-supported projects in Kaptembwo informal settlement, Nakuru City, Kenya. The theoretical and methodological basis for this study was Social Capital Theory and a mixed methods approach using a concurrent triangulation research design. The findings reported in this paper are drawn from a broader study on the influence of social capital on the performance of CBO-supported projects. A sample of 152 CBO members was selected through simple random sampling, while seven key informants, including CBO leaders, local administrators, and a Social Development Officer, were selected purposively. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used in analyzing quantitative data, while themes were used for qualitative data. The study found that membership diversity significantly influences project performance by enhancing innovation, knowledge sharing, inclusivity, as well as collective problem-solving. Diversity enabled CBOs to draw on multidimensional experiences, skills, and perspectives, thus improving decision-making and responsiveness to community needs. Conversely, diversity also presented challenges, such as interpersonal conflicts, communication barriers, unequal participation, as well as power imbalances that limited effective project implementation in the absence of adequate management. The study also found that female-dominated participation contributed more positively to project performance compared to gender-balanced representation, implying that active participation and commitment may be more influential compared numerical gender parity. The study concludes that membership diversity contributes positively to the performance of CBO-supported projects if supported by inclusive leadership, proper communication, and effective conflict management strategies. This study recommends strengthening inclusive governance structures, promotion of equitable participation, and institutionalization of conflict resolution practices to leverage the benefits of membership diversity in community-based development projects.

Key Words: Membership diversity, Performance of CBO-supported projects, Social Capital Theory, Informal Urban Settlements.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Social capital enjoys recognition as a critical resource enabling people and groups to collectively pursue common goals. First introduced by Hanifan (1916), social capital was conceptualized as the goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy, as well as daily social interactions (Tsounis & Xanthopoulou, 2024). Jacobs (1961) later put emphasis on the importance of social networks in the promotion of urban development, while Bourdieu (1986) conceptualized it as the actual and potential resources in one's social networks. Coleman (1988) expounded that social capital enables coordinated actions among people, whereas Putnam (1995) perceived it as a public good reflected in trust, civic participation, and community cooperation's (Siisiainen, 2003; Tsounis & Xanthopoulou, 2024). Modern literature therefore recognizes social capital as a multidimensional resource established through social networks, common values, trust, reciprocity, as well as collective engagement that results in cooperation and development (Tsounis & Xanthopoulou, 2024).

Among social capital dimensions, membership diversity continues to attract scholarly focus because it determines the level of knowledge, experiences, skills, and networks at disposal within community organizations. Membership diversity allows organizations to access wider perspectives, encourage innovation, enhance problem-solving, and mobilize resources from people with diverse socio-economic contexts. However, diversity can also lead to communication challenges, interpersonal conflicts, as well as unequal participation especially in the absence of proper management. Consequently, the influence of membership diversity on organizational performance remains both theoretically and empirically important.

Globally, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) increasingly depend on membership diversity to enhance community resilience and development outcomes. For example, in Japan, communities with robust and more diverse social networks have shown higher levels of resilience with reduced vulnerability to socio-economic bottlenecks. Similarly, in Bangladesh, it has enabled community-based adaptation by converging diverse groups to enhance community capacity and collective responses to community development challenges (Masud-All-Kamal et al., 2021). In Africa and specifically in Ethiopia, structural and relational social capital have enabled community organizations with members from diverse backgrounds pooling resources and reducing poverty using collective action (Yayeh & Demissie, 2024). These experiences imply that membership diversity can enhance project performance by widening knowledge, enhancing resource mobilization, and facilitating collective decision-making.

In Kenya, CBOs have become strategic vehicles for community empowerment, poverty mitigation, and community-level development. Studies indicate that social groups offer members with avenues to access business capital, loans, information, as well as livelihood opportunities, thus contributing to socio-economic development (Maseke, Muia & Ombaka, 2020). As of 2022, Kenya had more than one million registered community groups, encompassing Community-Based Organizations, self-help groups, youth groups, as well as women's groups among others. Jointly, these organizations have remained critical in the efforts towards realization of Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), as well as SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) (Assembly, 2015). Matelski and Woensdregt (2024) argued that Kenyan CBOs comprise both activist-identity-based and socio-economic organizations whose effectiveness rely mostly on members' ability to work together despite diversities along demographics such as age, sexuality, education, occupation, socio-economic status, among others.

In Nakuru County, Kaptembwo informal settlement offers a context where Community-Based Organizations remain integral in addressing socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, poor housing, sanitation, inadequate access to public services. CBOs operating within the settlement draw membership from different demographic and socio-economic backgrounds, making membership diversity a critical organizational characteristic. Despite diversity having the potential to motivate innovation, inclusivity, and resource mobilization, it has equal ability to cause coordination limitations if not properly managed (Mark et al., 2020). Despite the increasing role of CBOs in promoting community development within informal settlements, empirical evidence on the interplay between membership diversity and performance of CBO-supported projects in Kaptembwo informal settlement remains limited. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to examine the influence of membership diversity on the performance of Community-Based Organization-supported projects in Kaptembwo informal settlement, Nakuru City.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) remain indispensable actors in the promotion of community development, poverty reduction, and social empowerment, especially in informal urban settlements where resources are often inadequate. Their effectiveness on a large scale rely on their ability to mobilize members with diverse knowledge, experiences, skills, and social networks for sustainable community projects. While membership diversity is vastly acknowledged as a valuable dimension of social capital that can enhance innovation, inclusiveness, resource mobilization, and collective problem-solving, it may also create communication barriers, interpersonal conflicts, as well as skewed participation that undermine project performance if not well managed. Existing literature has mostly focused on the conceptualization of social capital (Hettne & Soderbaum, 2006; Tsounis & Xanthopoulou, 2024), while Fraser and Naquin (2022) focused the general influence of social capital on Community-Based Organizations. Nonetheless, limited empirical evidence

exists on membership diversity as a separate dimension of social capital and its interplay with performance of Community-Based Organization-supported projects, particularly in informal urban settlements in Kenya. This knowledge gap is evident in Kaptembwo informal settlement, where Community-Based Organizations operate in a highly diverse socio-economic environment and are expected to address multidimensional community development needs despite resource inadequacies. In the absence of empirical evidence on how membership diversity affects project performance, CBO managers, development partners, as well as policymakers lack context-specific information to come up with strategies that maximize the gains from diversity while mitigating its associated challenges. This study addressed this gap by examining the influence of membership diversity on the performance of Community-Based Organization-supported projects in Kaptembwo informal settlement, Nakuru City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance Of Cbo Projects

The level to which Community-Based Organization (CBO) projects meet or fail to meet their goals can be assessed through Project Implementation Indicators, including Completion of Milestones, Budget Adherence, Resource Allocation, and Stakeholder Engagement. The second indicator is Output Indicators and the Number of Participants (community members benefiting directly from the project). The third assessment is Outcome Indicators such as Behavioral Changes and Access to Resources or Services. On the other hand, Impact Indicators include long-term changes such as Reduction in Poverty Levels, Health Improvements, Education Outcomes, and Environmental Impact. The Sustainability Indicators, on the other hand, include community ownership, local capacity building, and sustainability of resources. The Social and Community Development Indicators include Increased Community Cohesion, Gender Equity and Empowerment. The other indicator of the performance of CBO projects is the Partnership and Collaboration Indicators, which include the Number of Partnerships Formed and the Level of Contribution from Partners (Jacob et al., 2022). For purposes of this study, the performance of CBO projects was assessed along summative indicators, which were completion milestones and impact on the wider community. This study analyzed how social capital, particularly membership diversity, influences the above-identified performance aspects of CBO-supported projects. The subsequent section, therefore, presents a literature review on membership diversity as a thematic area.

The Influence of Membership Diversity on The Performance of Cbos Projects

Membership diversity is important to any group or organization. Diversity enhances inclusivity which is critical aspect of social justice (Asvaroğlu & Asvaroğlu, 2022). Diversity prepares group members to thrive in fast-paced unpredictable as well as fundamentally changing environments. Song (2016) analyzed the effects of social capital on the organizational performance of local government and whether the effect was unique across national cultures. This study viewed social capital through cognitive, relational and structural capital. Targeting Omaha Nebraska in the U.S. and Wonju City in South Korea and a sample of 407 surveys which yielded a 72.23% response rate, the findings indicated that in both countries, social capital positively influenced on performance (Song, 2016). The major strengths of this study include targeting two countries and using an adequate sample size. In addition, this study focused on diversity of cultures as a component of membership diversity. However, this study was not done in Informal settlement areas and neither did the study target CBOs. Rather, it focused local government institutions. As such, its findings fall short of adequately answering the current research question.

Mwangi and Wambugu (2019) examined the effect of membership diversity on the performance of CBOs in rural Kenya. The research employed a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data from 150 members of various CBOs through structured questionnaires. The findings indicated that diversity in age, gender, and professional backgrounds positively influenced project outcomes, particularly in areas of community health and education (Mwangi and Wambugu). The study concluded that diverse perspectives led to more innovative solutions and improved project implementation. However, this study has limitations when applied to Kaptembwo Informal settlement area. The rural context of the study differs significantly from the urban setting of Kaptembwo, where socio-economic challenges, cultural dynamics, and resource availability may differ.

Additionally, the study focused on specific sectors like health and education, which may not encompass the range of projects undertaken by CBOs in urban Informal settlement areas.

The study by Karuga et al. (2023) examined the challenges faced by marginalized groups in urban informal settlements in Nairobi and how community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods can help these groups gain better representation in CBOs. It aimed at analyzing how these organizations, through inclusivity, could better address the needs of vulnerable populations, thereby improving their ability to serve the broader community effectively. This study used a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach including focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and participatory workshops, to gather qualitative data from residents in Nairobi's informal settlements. The research found that when CBOs employed inclusive practices and engaged diverse groups, the effectiveness of their projects increased, as they were better able to reach and address the needs of vulnerable populations. The study emphasized that CBOs that actively involve marginalized communities in their planning and implementation processes tended to have better success in creating sustainable change, as these groups had a stronger sense of ownership and empowerment. However, while the study sheds light on how inclusivity can enhance the effectiveness of CBOs, it falls short of addressing the specific dynamics of membership diversity in relation to the performance of CBOs. The focus on marginalized groups is important, but it does not delve deeply into how the diversity of members in terms of demographics (such as age, gender, education, or socio-economic status) influences the performance of CBOs in a direct way. Additionally, the study was conducted in Nairobi, which, while offering valuable insights into urban Informal settlement conditions, may not necessarily be applicable to Kaptembwo Informal settlement area in Nakuru. The socio-economic conditions, cultural dynamics, and the specific challenges faced by communities in Nakuru may differ significantly from those in Nairobi. Furthermore, it fails to explain how CBOs' internal membership composition impacts project performance. For example, CBOs in Kaptembwo might have different demographic makeup and face distinct challenges related to urban migration, infrastructure issues, or political factors that the study in Nairobi does not address. Therefore, while the study by Karuga et al. (2023) provides valuable insights into the importance of inclusivity, it does not directly explore how the diversity of CBO members affects their overall performance in specific project contexts, such as in Kaptembwo.

Otieno and Ochieng (2018) explored the impact of membership diversity on the effectiveness of CBOs in Nairobi's informal settlements. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data from 200 CBO members. The results highlighted that ethnic and cultural diversity within CBOs led to broader community outreach and resource pooling. However, the study also noted challenges such as communication barriers and conflicts arising from cultural differences. While this study provides valuable insights, its focus on Nairobi's informal settlements may not fully represent the specific challenges faced by CBOs in Kaptembwo Informal settlement area. The demographic composition, socio-economic conditions, and types of projects may differ, limiting the direct applicability of the findings.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by social capital theory. This theory was put forward by Bourdieu in 1985 as a combination of both real and potential resources linked to the existence of a durable network of relationships with mutual recognition (Siisiainen, 2003). This theory argues that networks create value to members by enabling them access social resources within the networks (Siisiainen, 2003). The theory further argues that such social networks must be established through deliberate initiatives inclined towards institutionalizing group relationships to guarantee benefits (Siisiainen, 2003). To Bourdieu, social capital comes in two forms which are the social relationships and the nature and quality of resources in the relationship. This theory can be used to explain performance of CBOs. The reason is that CBOs function along quality of social relationships from which different members and the community benefits. In CBOs, the main theoretical approaches to social capital are individualist and collective. This means that belonging to a CBO ensures both individual and collective advantages. A CBO performance is also reflected in the material advantages gained by different members who participate in social networks through complying with group behavior and norms. This happens if there is membership diversity. Performance of CBO supported projects therefore, operate under social capital theory since networks constitute collective resources that different members access through commitment and objectivity. This end up pooled to support community initiative, thus, project outcomes. Social capital theory

therefore, provides an important framework through which membership diversity as an aspect of social networks interact with performance of CBO projects.

In Kaptembwo Informal settlement area, CBOs often work in challenging environments with limited resources. By applying social capital theory, it becomes clear that the performance of CBO projects in this context depends largely on how effectively these organizations harness membership diversity. For example, CBOs with diverse memberships are likely to have more innovative ideas and greater access to a variety of resources, which can help overcome obstacles and ensure the success of projects. Besides, social capital theory suggests that the relationships between individuals and the collective norms that bind diverse members can enhance the capacity of CBOs to negotiate with external stakeholders, attract funding, and advocate for policy changes. In the context of Kaptembwo, these factors can influence the sustainability and scalability of CBO projects.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A mixed methods research approach was used, employing a concurrent triangulation research design, where qualitative data and quantitative data were collected concurrently. Each data set was analysed separately but results intergreted during interpretation. This provided a clear snapshot of the current dynamics within community-based organizations (CBOs). The design was thus, suitable in answering the what, where, when and how questions (Berger, 2015; Siedlecki, 2020). Descriptive research was valuable in this context because it allowed for the collection of detailed data on how membership diversity manifest within CBOs and their perceived impact on project outcomes. Descriptive research design facilitated the identification of trends and correlations that could inform future interventions aimed at enhancing CBO effectiveness. This design was ideal because it was easy to visit members of CBOs in their normal set up without interfering with their behavior. Descriptive design also enabled the ability to yield information on the present situation of a phenomenon and explain "what exists" regarding variables (Berger). In a nutshell, descriptive design allowed for a rich, contextualized understanding of the influence of social capital on CBO performance in Kaptembwo, making it an ideal fit for addressing the objectives of the study in a realistic and non-intrusive manner.

Study Area

This study was carried out in Kaptembwo informal settlement area in Nakuru West Sub-County. Based on 2019 census report, Nakuru West Sub-county had a population of 198,881(see area map in figure 2 below). Out of these, 101,797 (51.2%) were males while 48.8% were females. The two locations which currently make up Kaptembwo informal settlement area are Kaptembwo location with 48,572 and Kapkures Location with 6,183 people. Unlike the other parts of Nakuru City, the two locations are characterized with urban informal settlements with substandard housing, and poorly serviced, overcrowded, ethnic and culturally diverse, unhealthy, unsafe, and socially undesirable (Soma, Sukhwani & Shaw, 2022). It is also an area with many CBOs acting as an umbrella to support neighborhoods. This area had over 15 CBOs with example being Jamii Ajibika CBO, Talk to Save Youths CBO, among others. These CBOs had played pivotal role in supporting community resilience.

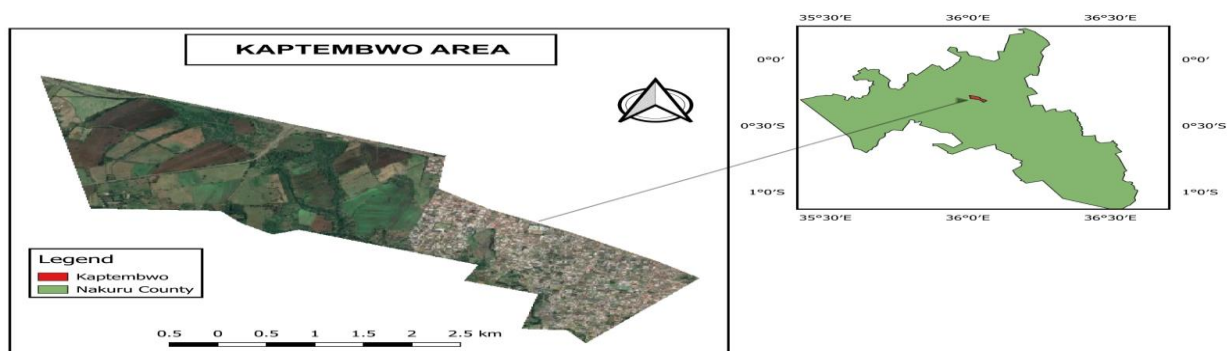


Figure 1: Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of Kaptembwo Location derived from SRTM data (NASA JPL, 2013).

Target Population and Sample Size

This section discusses the population of the area where the study was undertaken as well as a representative portion to participate in the study.

Target Population

The target population of this study was 245 residents of Kaptembwo Informal settlement who were registered members of CBOs in Kaptembwo Informal settlement area in Nakuru west Sub County (Nakuru West Sub-County Social Development Office data 2024). The current study also targeted, the leaders of the selected CBOs, local administrators as well as the Social Development Officer covering the area. The CBOs that were legible for inclusion in this study were those that were active and had been operation in the area for at least two years of operation. Those with below two years of operation were not included in this study. This current study assumed that this target group and timeframe could perfectly give a comprehensive view social capital, that is, the relationship between diversity of members and the performance of a Community Based Organization in an Informal settlement area.

Sample Size

The primary target population for this study were members of registered CBOs within Kaptembwo operating at least since 2022. CBO which had existed from at least from 2022 or with more than two years of operation were suitable to measure aspects of trust which takes more time to develop. They were also suitable to explain how their operations had run along membership diversity. The older the CBO the easier to understand their dynamics on membership diversity issues. Based on data at Social Development officer covering the study area, there were 19 CBOs in Kaptembwo Informal settlement area. However, only 10 of them meet the inclusion criteria with total membership population of 245.

A representative portion of the total population (245) was determined through Yamane (1967) formula

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

Where: -

n=Sample Size,

K = Constant = 1

e = Degree of error expected

$$n = \frac{245}{1 + 245(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 151.93 \sim 152$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study was 152 registered members of CBOs. Their representation was however relative to individual group population. The proportionate sample was determined by the formula $A/245 \times 152$ where A= population of individual CBO, 245=total population of CBO and 152 as sample size.

Table 1: Kaptembwo Informal settlement area registered CBOs with more than two years in operation

	CBO	Objective	Number of members	Sample
1	Boresha CBO	Youth empowerment	20	12

2	Upendo CBO	Providing legal services and other assistance to the HIV patients and the vulnerable people	23	14
3	Victors CBO	Youth and women empowerment	19	12
4	Disability beyond understanding CBO	Empowerment of people with disability	31	19
5	Happy Community Organization	Eradicate poverty through our charity programs	30	19
6	Flamingo Community Organization	Economic skills empowerment	19	12
7	Women Like Us Center	Promoting gender equality as well as the rights, health, and education of girls	25	16
8	Children at Crossroads	Reintegrating and empowering lost children with families	21	13
9	Jamii Ajibika CBO	Empowering vulnerable young populations living in marginalized communities	23	14
10	Talk To save Youths CBO	Sensitize the society on issues affecting youths and women	34	21
	TOTAL		245	152

Source: Social Development office Nakuru Town West (2024).

Sampling Procedures

To select 152 participants from a total population of 254 CBO members across 10 CBOs, simple random sampling was used. First, the researcher identified leaders for the 10 CBOs and obtained a complete and updated list of all the 254 members. Each member was assigned a unique identification number from 1 to 254. This formed the sampling frame. Next, proportional allocation was used to ensure fair representation from each of the 10 CBOs. The number of members selected from each CBO was determined based on the proportion of its membership relative to the total. For instance, if one CBO had 30 members, its share of the sample was calculated as $(30/254) \times 152$, which equals approximately 19 participants. This step was repeated for each of the 10 CBOs to allocate the sample size proportionally. After proportional allocation, simple random sampling was conducted within each CBO. For this, the names of all members in each CBO were listed and assigned numbers. A random number table was then used to select the allocated number of participants for that CBO. This method ensured that each member had an equal and unbiased chance of being selected. Finally, the selected participants from all 10 CBOs were combined to form the total sample of 152 respondents. On the other hand, key Informants were selected using purposive sampling. In this regard, social development Officer, CBO leaders and Local administrators in the study area were selected to participate in the study. The reason was that purposive sampling focuses on desired characteristics such as knowledge and experience of participants on a research topic (Campel et al, 2020).

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this current study was individual registered member of a CBO selected for the study from Kaptembwo and Kapkures locations. The CBO members were to belong to the group which had existed for at least two years. The CBO also had to be operating formally with registration.

Methods and Tools of Data Collection

Data collection is an important activity in research as it entails gathering information for analysis (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). This study intended to gather primary through survey and Key Informants Interviews (KIIs). Specifically, interview schedules were used in the survey and Key Informant Interview guide in KIIs as tools of data collection.

Pilot Study

Piloting is an important process in research because of a number of reasons. First it helps researchers to define and further refine the initial research question through ruling some factors and creating benchmarks for feasibility of the large-scale study. It also helps to test the study and its design and enable establishment of different research techniques. Another importance is that it helps to test safety, determine feasibility and also produces preliminary data. To ensure the research instrument met the objective criteria, a pilot test involving one CBO from each sub-location; Kaptembwo and Kapkures was randomly selected. These two CBOs were not included in the main study. The data collection tools were reviewed based on the pilot test for alignment.

Reliability

By definition, this the level in which a research instrument yields consistent results (Polit & Beck, 2017). Reliability is an important aspect of research since it helps to ensure that results are stable, precise as well as reproducible. In ensuring reliability, two critical factors were considered. The first one was reliable use of methods. This entailed carrying out similar steps in the similar way for every dimension. The second one was standardized conditions. In some cases, external factors can lead to dissimilarity in the final outcomes. Therefore, while collecting data, it was important to keep the conditions as reliable as possible. To ensure reliability, test-retest method was used through administering the interview schedule to same participants sampled in the pilot thrice. The same interview schedule was administered to the same group of pilot participants on three different occasions under similar conditions. The responses obtained were then compared to assess consistency over time. A high level of similarity in responses across the three administrations indicated that the instrument was reliable.

Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the research instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure and truthfully represents participants' experiences (Polit & Beck, 2017). To enhance validity, the study employed methodological triangulation by using interview schedules, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and in-depth interviews to collect data from different perspectives. In addition, content validity was ensured by exposing the research instruments to experts in the field for review, where they assessed the relevance, clarity, and adequacy of the items. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the tools. Further, a pilot study was conducted to test the instruments on a small sample of respondents to determine whether the questions were clear, understandable, and interpreted as intended. Necessary adjustments were made based on the pilot findings, thereby improving the validity of the instruments.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an important process in research which turns raw data into information (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). Quantitative data on membership diversity and its influence on performance of CBO was analyzed using mean and frequency distribution tables. Qualitative data gathered through interviews was analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis allows interpreting patterns of meaning across a data set to uncover nuances that might otherwise be overlooked (Squires, 2023). This process facilitated a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences, perspectives, and interaction within CBOs projects.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations play an important role in ensuring that research upholds required standard. The current study collected data from respondents and as such, it was guided by the following ethical considerations. First, there was informed consent where research participants were told the purpose of research and the intended use

of data, which was purely academic. In addition, the consent of participants in qualitative component was sought where audio recording was desirable. Second, issues on anonymity and confidentiality were upheld. Anonymity was achieved by designing the tools of data collection in a way that they did not capture information that could positively identify participants. Confidentiality was achieved by ensuring data collected was kept confidential particularly by ensuring they were securely stored in a computer file protected by a password. Third, the researcher sought ethical clearance from Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee and a permission to conduct research was sought from National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) Kenya. Additional permission was sought from the Director of Education, Nakuru County as well as the Nakuru County Commissioner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Findings

4. 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents who participated in the study. Demographic data are presented using tables, followed by interpretation and discussion grounded in relevant literature and theory. The demographic attributes are discussed as contextual factors influencing social capital formation and the performance of Community-Based Organization (CBO) projects in Kaptembwo informal settlement.

Table 2: Response rate

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
CBO members	152	100
Social Developmet officer	1	100
Chiefs	2	100.0
CBO leaders	4	100
Total	159	100

Table 2 shows the number of respondents who participated in the study. There were 152 CBO members, 4 CBO leader, 2 area chiefs and 1 Social Development officer. This represents a 100% response rate based on the expected sample size.

Table 3: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	69	45.4
Female	83	54.6
Total	152	100.0

Table 3 presents the gender distribution of respondents. As shown, females constituted 54.6% of the respondents while males accounted for 45.4%. This relatively balanced gender representation indicates inclusivity within CBO membership. Studies on community-based organizations indicate that gender-balanced participation enhances cooperation, accountability, and responsiveness to community needs, which in turn improves project performance (Mwangi & Wambugu, 2019).

Table 4: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–29	44	28.9
30–39	63	41.4
40–49	29	19.1
50 and above	16	10.6
Total	152	100.0

Table 4 presents the age distribution of respondents. the findings indicate that the shows that a large proportion of respondents were aged 30–39 years ($n = 63$, 41.4%), followed by those aged 18–29 years ($n = 44$, 28.9%). respondents aged 40–49 years represented 19.1% of the sample ($n = 29$), and those aged 50 years and above accounted for 10.6% ($n = 16$). these results demonstrate that the sample primarily consisted of younger and middle-aged adults, with the largest proportion in the 30–39-year age group.". this suggests that cbos draw membership from economically productive and socially active age groups. according to social capital theory, age diversity enhances intergenerational learning, leadership continuity, and collective action, which are critical for sustained project performance (siisiainen, 2003).

Table 5: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	31	20.4
Married	74	48.7
Divorced	29	19.1
Widowed	18	11.8
Total	152	100.0

Table 5 presents the marital status of respondents. The findings indicate that nearly half of the respondents were married ($n = 74$, 48.7%), representing the largest proportion of the sample. This was followed by single respondents ($n = 31$, 20.4%) and divorced respondents ($n = 29$, 19.1%), while widowed respondents constituted the smallest proportion ($n = 18$, 11.8%). This diversity in marital status reflects varied household responsibilities and social roles, which broaden perspectives and enhance social cohesion within CBOs. Such diversity supports inclusive participation and sustained engagement in community projects (Mutenje, 2017).

Table 6: Level of Education of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary	36	23.7
Secondary	71	46.7
College	29	19.1

University	16	10.5
Total	152	100.0

Table 6 presents the highest level of education attained by respondents. The findings indicate that the largest proportion of respondents had attained secondary education ($n = 71$, 46.7%). This was followed by those with primary education ($n = 36$, 23.7%), college education ($n = 29$, 19.1%), and university education, which constituted the smallest proportion ($n = 16$, 10.5%). The results show that most respondents had secondary education, while a notable proportion had college and university education. Educational diversity enhances the technical, managerial, and contextual knowledge base of CBOs, thereby strengthening planning, implementation, and monitoring of projects (Song, 2016).

Table 7: Length of Membership in CBOs

Years of Membership	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1–5	48	31.6
6–10	62	40.8
11–15	28	18.4
Above 15	14	9.2
Total	152	100.0

Table 7 presents the length of membership of respondents in their respective CBOs. The findings indicate that most respondents had been members for more than five years. Long-term membership strengthens bonding social capital through trust, shared norms, and commitment to organizational goals, which enhances project performance and sustainability. This current study's findings are in line with Siisianen findings

Table 8: Religious Affiliation of Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christian	117	77.0
Muslim	35	23.0
Total	152	100.0

Table 8 presents the religious affiliation of respondents. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were Christians ($n = 117$, 77.0%), while Muslims constituted a smaller proportion ($n = 35$, 23.0%). The presence of more than one religious group reflects the pluralistic nature of Kaptembwo informal settlement. Shared moral values across religious groups can promote honesty, mutual support, and cooperation, which are essential for effective implementation of CBO-supported projects (Prince, 2024).

Table 9: Ethnic Background of Respondents

Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Kikuyu	46	30.3
Kalenjin	39	25.7

Luhya	31	20.4
Embu	21	13.8
Others	15	9.8
Total	152	100.0

Table 9 presents the ethnic background of respondents. The findings indicate that the largest proportion of respondents were from the Kikuyu ethnic group ($n = 46$, 30.3%), followed by Kalenjin ($n = 39$, 25.7%) and Luhya ($n = 31$, 20.4%). Respondents from the Embu community accounted for 13.8% ($n = 21$), while those from other ethnic groups constituted the smallest proportion at 9.8% ($n = 15$). The findings reveal a diverse ethnic composition with no single group dominating. Ethnic diversity enhances bridging social capital, promotes inclusivity, and improves the ability of CBOs to mobilize resources and address diverse community needs, thereby improving project performance (Karuga et al., 2023).

4.2 Membership diversity and performance of CBO supported project

This section presents findings on the influence of membership diversity on the performance of Community-Based Organization (CBO) supported projects in Kaptembwo informal settlement. Membership diversity is analyzed in terms of age composition, gender dominance, ethnic composition, religious composition, and the contribution of diversity to knowledge base and expertise. The analysis is guided by Social Capital Theory, which emphasizes that diversity enhances collective action, learning, and organizational performance.

Table 10: Age Composition of CBO Members

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Youth (18–29 years)	44	28.9
Middle-aged (30–39 years)	63	41.4
Older adults (40 years and above)	45	29.7
Total	152	100.0

The findings in Table 10 presents the age composition of members in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The findings indicate that the largest proportion of respondents were middle-aged (30–39 years) ($n = 63$, 41.4%), followed by older adults aged 40 years and above ($n = 45$, 29.7%), while youth aged 18–29 years constituted 28.9% ($n = 44$) of the sample. This distribution suggests a balanced generational composition within CBOs. Analytically, the dominance of middle-aged members implies that project performance is driven by economically active and socially stable individuals, who are more likely to possess leadership experience, financial stability, and established social networks. However, the presence of youth and older members introduces complementary advantages, particularly innovation and experiential knowledge, respectively.

These findings partially align with Mwangi and Wambugu (2019), who found that age diversity enhances project outcomes through improved innovation and decision-making. Similarly, Song (2016) supports the argument that diversity contributes to organizational performance through enhanced social capital. However, the current study extends and slightly contradicts existing literature by demonstrating that performance is not merely a function of diversity presence, but of dominance within diversity. Specifically, while literature emphasizes balanced diversity, the findings show that middle-aged dominance plays a central role in driving performance, suggesting that certain age groups may have disproportionate influence. This nuance is largely absent in previous studies.

Table 11: Gender Dominance in CBO Membership

Dominant Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male-dominated	52	34.2
Female-dominated	68	44.7
Gender-balanced	32	21.1
Total	152	100.0

The findings in Table 11 presents the gender dominance in membership of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The findings indicate that the largest proportion of respondents reported that their CBOs are female-dominated ($n = 68$, 44.7%), followed by male-dominated groups ($n = 52$, 34.2%). A smaller proportion indicated that their organizations are gender-balanced ($n = 32$, 21.1%). This indicates a significant gender imbalance in membership composition. From an analytical perspective, the dominance of women suggests that project performance in CBOs is strongly anchored in social cohesion, commitment, and participation, traits commonly associated with female engagement in community initiatives. However, the relatively low proportion of gender-balanced groups raises concerns regarding the optimal utilization of complementary gender roles. These findings support Mwangi and Wambugu (2019), who argue that gender diversity enhances accountability and responsiveness. However, the present study introduces a critical deviation by showing that female dominance not necessarily gender balance is the prevailing driver of participation and performance. This finding contradicts the conventional assumption in literature that balanced gender representation yields the best outcomes. Instead, it suggests that in informal settlement contexts, female-led structures may be more effective due to stronger social commitment and grassroots engagement. This represents a context-specific contribution to the literature.

Table 12: Ethnic Composition of CBO Members

Ethnic Composition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Homogeneous (one dominant group)	39	25.7
Moderately diverse	61	40.1
Highly diverse	52	34.2
Total	152	100.0

The findings in Table 12 presents the ethnic composition of members in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The findings indicate that the largest proportion of respondents reported their CBOs as moderately diverse ($n = 61$, 40.1%), followed by highly diverse groups ($n = 52$, 34.2%). A smaller proportion indicated that their organizations were homogeneous, consisting of one dominant ethnic group ($n = 39$, 25.7%). This reflects the heterogeneous nature of Kaptembwo informal settlement. The findings suggest that ethnic diversity enhances project legitimacy, inclusivity, and community acceptance, thereby improving performance outcomes. Diverse groups are better positioned to mobilize resources and address varied community needs. These findings are consistent with Karuga et al., who found that inclusivity improves effectiveness, and Otieno and Ochieng (2018), who observed that diversity enhances outreach and resource pooling. However, the current study does not strongly capture the negative effects (e.g., conflict and communication barriers) reported by Otieno and Ochieng. This suggests a contradiction, where ethnic diversity in Kaptembwo appears to be more functional and less conflict-prone than previously documented. This difference may be attributed to adaptive community mechanisms within Kaptembwo, where prolonged exposure to diversity has strengthened tolerance and

cooperation. Thus, the study contributes new insight that diversity effects are context-dependent and may evolve positively over time.

Table 13: Religious Composition of CBO Members

Religious Composition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single dominant religion	58	38.2
Mixed religious membership	94	61.8
Total	152	100.0

Table 13 presents the religious composition of members in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The findings indicate that the majority of respondents reported mixed religious membership within their CBOs ($n = 94$, 61.8%), while a smaller proportion indicated that their organizations were composed of a single dominant religion ($n = 58$, 38.2%). Analytically, religious diversity appears to enhance normative cohesion, as members draw from shared ethical values such as honesty, accountability, and mutual respect. This contributes positively to trust and collaboration, which are essential for project success. These findings align with Prince, who emphasizes that shared moral norms strengthen cooperation. However, the current study provides a unique contribution by demonstrating that religious diversity does not create division but instead reinforces unity through shared values. This contrasts with broader sociological assumptions that religious differences may lead to fragmentation. Therefore, the findings suggest that in CBO contexts, functional values override doctrinal differences, enhancing performance.

Table 14: Influence of Membership Diversity on Knowledge Base and Expertise

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	108	71.1
Disagree	44	28.9
Total	152	100.0

Table 14 presents respondents' views on the influence of membership diversity on the knowledge base and expertise within Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The findings indicate that a majority of respondents agreed that membership diversity enhances the knowledge base and expertise of the organization ($n = 108$, 71.1%), while a smaller proportion disagreed ($n = 44$, 28.9%). The findings reveal that a significant majority (71.1%) agreed that membership diversity enhances the knowledge base and expertise within CBOs. From an analytical standpoint, this indicates that diversity contributes to functional efficiency, as members bring varied skills, education levels, and experiences that improve decision-making and implementation capacity. These findings are consistent with Song, who argues that diversity enhances learning and innovation. However, the study introduces a critical refinement by highlighting that the benefits of diversity are conditional. A notable proportion (28.9%) disagreed, citing limitations such as inadequate leadership and lack of capacity to utilize diverse skills. This finding challenges the assumption that diversity automatically leads to improved performance. Instead, it demonstrates that diversity requires effective management and institutional support to translate into performance gains. This represents a significant theoretical and practical contribution.

4.3 Performance of CBO-supported projects

This section presents findings on the performance of Community-Based Organization (CBO) supported projects in Kaptembwo informal settlement. Performance was assessed using three key indicators: types of projects supported, timely completion of projects, and perceived impact on the wider community. The analysis is based on responses from 152 respondents.

Table 15: Types of Projects Supported by CBOs

Project Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Youth empowerment	26	17.1
Education support	24	15.8
Microfinance and savings	21	13.8
Health education	20	13.2
Women empowerment	19	12.5
Agriculture development	17	11.2
Environmental conservation	14	9.2
Water and sanitation	11	7.2
Total	152	100.0

Table 15 presents the types of projects supported by Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The findings indicate that youth empowerment projects were the most common ($n = 26$, 17.1%), followed by education support ($n = 24$, 15.8%) and microfinance and savings initiatives ($n = 21$, 13.8%). Health education ($n = 20$, 13.2%) and women empowerment projects ($n = 19$, 12.5%) were also notable areas of focus. Agriculture development accounted for 11.2% ($n = 17$), while environmental conservation ($n = 14$, 9.2%) and water and sanitation projects ($n = 11$, 7.2%) were the least represented. These findings suggest that CBOs in Kaptembwo are largely oriented toward addressing socio-economic challenges affecting young people, education access, and household livelihoods. The diversity of projects reflects responsiveness to the multifaceted needs of informal settlement communities, where issues such as unemployment, limited access to education, and financial exclusion are prevalent. According to Jacobo et al. (2022), project relevance to community needs is a critical indicator of organizational performance. The prominence of empowerment-oriented projects further aligns with Social Capital Theory, which emphasizes collective action and resource pooling to address shared community challenges (Siisiainen, 2003). The findings imply that CBOs in Kaptembwo are actively engaging in projects with the potential to generate both immediate and long-term community benefits.

Table 16: Completion of CBO-Supported Projects on Time

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	78	51.3
No	74	48.7
Total	152	100.0

Table 16 presents respondents' views on the completion of Community-Based Organization (CBO)-supported projects on time. The findings indicate that slightly more than half of the respondents reported that projects are completed on time ($n = 78$, 51.3%), while a nearly equal proportion indicated that projects are not completed on time ($n = 74$, 48.7%). This finding suggests that while a marginal majority of CBO projects meet scheduled timelines, delays remain a significant challenge. Qualitative explanations revealed that timely completion was often attributed to strong member commitment, effective coordination, and adherence to agreed work plans. Conversely, delays were linked to factors such as inadequate funding, poor planning, and logistical constraints. These current's study findings resonate with Mutenje (2017), who notes that organizational performance

depends on coordination, leadership, and availability of resources. From a social capital perspective, trust and cooperation among members enhance efficiency and timely execution of projects. The nearly balanced distribution observed in this study indicates that strengthening internal trust and coordination mechanisms could significantly improve project completion rates in Kaptembwo.

Table 17: Impact of CBO-Supported Projects on the Wider Community

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	72	47.4
No	80	52.6
Total	152	100.0

The findings in Table 17 presents respondents' perceptions of the impact of Community-Based Organization (CBO)-supported projects on the wider community. The findings indicate that slightly more than half of the respondents reported that CBO-supported projects do not have a significant impact on the wider community ($n = 80, 52.6\%$), while a slightly smaller proportion indicated that such projects do have an impact ($n = 72, 47.4\%$). Respondents who reported positive impact cited improvements such as enhanced skills among youth, empowerment of women, improved access to basic services, and increased community awareness. Those who did not perceive positive impact explained that some projects were still ongoing or that outcomes were not yet measurable. According to Jacobo et al. (2022), impact indicators often take longer to manifest compared to implementation outputs. These findings suggest that while CBO projects in Kaptembwo show promise, sustained support, effective monitoring, and stronger community engagement are necessary to translate activities into tangible long-term impact. These results further underscore the importance of social capital elements particularly trust and participation in ensuring that project benefits extend beyond immediate beneficiaries to the wider community.

Qualitative Findings

This section presents qualitative findings from key informant interviews conducted with five knowledgeable stakeholders, including CBO leaders, a Social Development Officer, and a local administrator. The analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, guided by this current's study objectives and the interview guide. Thematic analysis involved familiarization with the data, coding of responses, categorization into themes, and interpretation in relation to the study objectives and Social Capital Theory (Squires, 2023).

Experience with CBO-Supported Projects

Key informants demonstrated extensive and diverse engagement with CBO-supported projects, including youth empowerment, sanitation, food security, health initiatives, women empowerment, and local governance programs. Across interviews, there was a consistent view that CBOs play a critical gap-filling role, particularly in informal settlements where state and formal institutional support is often inadequate or delayed.

One key informant (KI2 CBO Chairperson) explained: "In this community, many problems are not addressed quickly by the government, especially issues like waste management, youth unemployment, and access to clean water. CBOs step in because they understand the local problems better. For example, through our youth programs, we have managed to reduce cases of crime and drug abuse. We also organize regular clean-up activities, and this has improved sanitation and reduced disease outbreaks. Without these initiatives, the situation would be much worse." (KI2 CBO Chairperson)

This narrative illustrates that CBOs are not merely complementary actors but primary service providers in certain domains, directly influencing social order and public health outcomes.

Similarly, another informant noted: “Most of the women in this area depend on small-scale businesses and group savings. Through the CBO, we have been able to start income-generating activities like table banking and small farming projects. We have also worked on water projects, which have reduced the burden on women who used to walk long distances to fetch water. These projects have improved our household income and living standards.” (KI4, Women Group Leader, 2025).

This current study's finding highlights the gendered impact of CBO interventions, particularly in improving livelihoods and reducing vulnerability. Analytically, these findings extend beyond Jacobo et al. (2022) by demonstrating that CBOs in informal settlements do not only enhance sustainability but also serve as adaptive, context-responsive institutions that directly substitute for weak formal systems. This represents a unique contribution, as most literature underestimates the intensity of CBO involvement in basic service provision.

Influence of Membership Diversity on Performance of CBO Projects

Theme 1: Age Diversity

Age diversity emerged as a critical factor influencing both the effectiveness and sustainability of CBO-supported projects. Key informants consistently emphasized that the coexistence of younger and older members creates a dynamic environment where innovation and experience intersect. Younger members were frequently described as energetic, adaptable, and technologically inclined, while older members were viewed as custodians of institutional memory, social norms, and community legitimacy.

KI7(CBO leader) explained: “Young people bring new ideas, especially in technology and innovation, while older members guide us using their experience. For example, when we are running projects, the youth help in communication through social media and digital platforms, while older members ensure that what we are doing is acceptable to the community. When these groups work together, projects become stronger and more sustainable because we combine energy with wisdom.”

This response by KI7(CBO leader) demonstrates that age diversity contributes to complementary role allocation, where different age groups provide distinct but mutually reinforcing capacities. In practice, this enhances project design, implementation efficiency, and community acceptance. However, the findings also reveal tensions inherent in intergenerational collaboration.

KI1 noted: “Sometimes older members resist new ideas from the youth, especially when it comes to changes in how things are done. They prefer traditional approaches, and this can slow down innovation. On the other hand, young people may feel ignored or discouraged, which affects their participation.”

This response by KI1(social development officer) introduces a critical contradiction while age diversity can enhance performance through synergy, it can also constrain progress when intergenerational conflicts are not effectively managed. Analytically, this finding extends existing perspectives by demonstrating that age diversity is not inherently beneficial; rather, its impact depends on the presence of mechanisms for negotiation, mutual respect, and adaptive leadership. This represents a unique contribution, as many studies emphasize intergenerational benefits without adequately addressing resistance dynamics within community organizations.

Theme 2: Gender Diversity

Gender diversity was identified as a highly influential factor in shaping project performance, participation levels, and overall community impact. Informants consistently reported that women play a central role in the success of CBO initiatives, particularly in areas such as health, water access, food security, and household welfare.

KI6 explained: “Women are more active in community work because they are directly affected by issues like water, health, and food security.

They attend meetings consistently and follow up on project activities to make sure things are done.

In many cases, women are the ones pushing projects forward because they see the direct benefits in their homes and families.”

This response by KI6 (chief) highlights the practical and experiential motivation driving women’s participation, which translates into higher commitment and accountability.

Further probing revealed an even more nuanced insight: “In some groups, women actually outnumber men, and this has helped projects move faster. Men sometimes attend meetings irregularly, but women remain consistent and ensure continuity of activities.”

This finding challenge conventional assumptions in the literature that emphasize gender balance as the ideal condition for performance. Instead, the present study suggests that in certain community contexts, female dominance not mere balance can drive effectiveness, particularly where project outcomes are closely tied to household welfare.

However, a subtle limitation also emerged.

Three informants hinted that: “Even though women are active, leadership positions are sometimes still influenced by men, which can affect decision-making.”

This suggests that while participation may be high, power distribution may still be unequal, indicating a gap between involvement and influence. This nuanced finding adds depth to existing literature by distinguishing between numerical representation and actual decision-making power.

Theme 3: Educational Diversity

Educational diversity was widely perceived as beneficial for enhancing technical capacity, strategic planning, and administrative efficiency within CBOs. Informants highlighted that members with formal education often take the lead in proposal writing, financial management, and reporting, while those with less formal education contribute through practical knowledge and community-based experience.

KI4 stated: “Members with education help in writing proposals and managing funds, while others contribute practical knowledge from the community. For example, educated members can handle documentation and communication with donors, while others ensure that projects are implemented effectively on the ground. This combination is important for the success of our projects.”

This response by KI4 (CBO leader) demonstrates that educational diversity supports functional specialization, which enhances overall organizational performance.

However, the findings also revealed an important internal challenge: “Sometimes those with higher education dominate discussions and decision-making. Other members may feel that their ideas are not valued, especially if they cannot express themselves in technical language. This can reduce participation and create divisions within the group.”

This exposes a power imbalance within diverse groups, where educational differences translate into unequal influence. Such dynamics can undermine inclusivity and weaken collective ownership of projects. Analytically, this finding is particularly significant because it moves beyond the conventional view of education as purely beneficial. Instead, it demonstrates that educational diversity must be carefully managed to avoid elite dominance and marginalization of less-educated members. This represents a critical and relatively underexplored dimension in the study of CBO performance.

Theme 4: Ethnic and Religious Diversity

Ethnic and religious diversity was reported to enhance inclusivity, social reach, and legitimacy of CBO projects within heterogeneous communities. Informants indicated that diverse membership enables organizations to engage with a broader section of the population, thereby improving participation and acceptance.

KI2 noted: “Diversity helps us reach many people because different members connect with different groups in the community. It also promotes unity because people learn to work together despite their differences. This makes our projects more inclusive and acceptable.”

This response by KI2(CBO chair) suggests that diversity contributes to bridging social capital, strengthening relationships across different social groups.

However, informants were equally candid about the challenges associated with diversity: “Sometimes diversity brings misunderstandings, especially when cultural or religious practices conflict with project schedules or activities. For example, meetings may clash with religious events, or some practices may not be acceptable to certain groups. If not handled carefully, these issues can create tension.”

Despite these challenges, informants emphasized the role of dialogue, flexibility, and mutual respect in mitigating conflicts: “We solve these issues by talking openly and adjusting plans to accommodate everyone. Respecting each other’s beliefs is very important.” This finding reinforces the dual nature of diversity it is both a resource and a risk. Unlike many studies that emphasize only its benefits, the present study provides a more balanced perspective by highlighting the conditions under which diversity becomes productive.

Negative Effects of Unmanaged Diversity

While diversity offers numerous benefits, key informants strongly cautioned that unmanaged diversity can undermine project performance. Conflicts arising from differences in age, education, gender roles, or cultural backgrounds were identified as major risks.

KI6 stated: “When conflicts are not addressed early, they grow and affect the whole project. Small disagreements can turn into serious disputes, and this affects teamwork. Some members withdraw completely, while others lose motivation, and this slows down progress.”

KI2 (CBO chair) added: “In some cases, projects have stalled because members could not agree on certain issues. Without proper conflict resolution mechanisms, diversity becomes a weakness instead of a strength.”

These findings highlight that diversity requires active governance structures, including conflict resolution mechanisms, inclusive leadership, and clear communication channels. This underscores a key insight: diversity does not automatically translate into improved performance it must be intentionally managed. This reinforces the importance of leadership and institutional frameworks in harnessing the benefits of diversity.

Completion Milestones and Community Impact

Key informants reported significant achievements in terms of project completion and community impact. Completed projects included sanitation facilities, water access points, youth empowerment centers, kitchen gardens, and health awareness programs.

KI3 explained: “These projects have reduced crime, improved hygiene, and created opportunities for young people. For example, youth who were previously idle are now engaged in productive activities. Access to clean water has also improved, reducing the burden on households and improving health conditions.”

KI6 informant added: “The community has become more organized and supportive of development initiatives. People now see the value of working together, and this has strengthened unity.”

These findings demonstrate that CBO projects generate both tangible outcomes (infrastructure, services) and intangible benefits (social cohesion, empowerment). Importantly, the qualitative findings triangulate and enrich quantitative results, showing not just that projects are completed, but also how and why they create meaningful change at the community level.

Suggestions for Enhancing Human Capital

Key informants provided detailed and experience-based recommendations aimed at strengthening human capital within CBOs to enhance overall project performance. These recommendations largely focused on capacity building, governance improvement, leadership development, and inclusivity, reflecting the practical challenges faced during project implementation. The need for leadership and management training was strongly emphasized across multiple informants.

Social Development Officer (K11) explained: “From my experience working with different community groups, the main challenge is not always lack of funds, but lack of proper leadership and management skills. Many leaders are committed, but they do not have adequate training in how to coordinate activities, manage people, or make strategic decisions. If we invest in leadership training, especially on accountability and planning, most of these projects would perform much better and even attract more support from partners.”

This response highlights that leadership gaps directly affect efficiency, coordination, and sustainability, suggesting that strengthening leadership capacity is a priority area for intervention.

Similarly, the importance of financial management skills was emphasized by the CBO leader (KI7), who noted: “Financial management is one of the weakest areas in many CBOs. Sometimes funds are available, but poor record-keeping and lack of transparency create mistrust among members. We need proper training on budgeting, record-keeping, and financial reporting so that every member understands how resources are used. When finances are well managed, members gain confidence and are more willing to contribute.”

This finding underscores that financial skills are not only technical but also relational, as they directly influence trust, accountability, and member participation.

A CBO Leader (KI4) further emphasized the importance of conflict resolution and governance structures, stating: “Conflicts are inevitable in any group, especially when people come from different backgrounds. The problem is that many groups do not have clear mechanisms to handle disputes. Training on conflict resolution and establishing clear governance structures can help prevent small disagreements from escalating and affecting project progress.”

This suggests that human capital development must also include institutional and interpersonal skills, particularly those related to managing diversity and maintaining group cohesion.

In addition, the importance of effective communication and transparency was highlighted by (KI1 Social Development Officer), who explained: “Communication is an area that is often ignored, yet it is very important. Members need to be trained on how to share information clearly and consistently, whether through meetings, reports, or digital platforms. When communication improves, misunderstandings reduce, and coordination becomes much easier.”

This perspective reinforces that communication effectiveness is a learned skill, not just a structural process. Beyond training, informants also proposed the introduction of structured mentorship and continuous learning systems.

KI3) noted: “New members often struggle because they do not understand how the group operates. If we had mentorship programs where experienced members guide new ones, it would improve participation and continuity. Learning should not stop after initial training; there should be continuous capacity building.”

This highlights the importance of knowledge transfer and institutional memory, which are critical for long-term sustainability. Furthermore, informants stressed the need for inclusive participation frameworks to ensure that all members, regardless of education level, gender, or age, are meaningfully involved.

KI7 added: “Training should also focus on inclusivity, so that all members feel valued and are able to contribute. When people feel included, they are more committed, and this improves project outcomes.”

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that enhancing human capital goes beyond basic training to include a comprehensive system of skills development, mentorship, governance strengthening, and inclusive participation. Importantly, the findings reveal a critical insight: many challenges affecting CBO performance are not due to resource constraints but rather capacity limitations in managing available resources effectively. This shifts the focus from external support to internal capability development, which is a more sustainable approach. These recommendations strongly reinforce the study's conceptual framework by illustrating that human capital (skills, knowledge, leadership capacity, and governance competence) acts as a key enabler in maximizing the benefits of membership diversity. Without adequate human capacity, even strong social networks may fail to translate into improved project performance. Analytically, these recommendations reinforce the study's conceptual framework by emphasizing that human capital (skills, knowledge, leadership capacity) is central to maximizing the benefits of social capital (trust, networks, diversity).

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that membership diversity has a complex but generally positive influence on project performance. Age, gender, ethnic, religious, and educational diversity were all found to contribute to knowledge sharing, inclusivity, and resource mobilization. The study introduces several important discrepancies. First, it demonstrates that group performance is influenced more by the predominance of middle-aged individuals than by a balanced age distribution. Second, it indicates that female predominance, rather than gender parity, significantly enhances participation and project continuity. Third, although educational diversity is generally advantageous, it may also result in power imbalances within groups. Finally, in contrast to some existing literature, the study finds that ethnic and religious diversity in this context fosters cohesion rather than conflict.

These findings partially support existing studies (Mwangi & Wambugu, Song, Karuga et al.) but also challenge conventional assumptions, particularly the idea that balance is always optimal. Instead, the study demonstrates that context matters, and certain dominant groups may drive effectiveness in informal settlements. Additionally, qualitative findings highlight that unmanaged diversity can lead to conflict, indicating that diversity must be supported by strong leadership and governance structures.

The study found that CBOs are actively engaged in diverse projects, particularly in youth empowerment, education, and livelihoods. While slightly over half of the projects are completed on time, nearly equal proportions experience delays, and community impact remains moderate. This suggests that while CBOs are relevant and active, their performance is constrained by challenges such as resource limitations, weak coordination, and capacity gaps. From a Social Capital Theory perspective, diversity enhances resource mobilization.

However, the findings show that social capital alone is insufficient without adequate human capital (skills, leadership, financial management). Overall, the study demonstrates that diversity influence project performance. However, its effectiveness depends on human capacity and institutional structures. The study therefore extends Social Capital Theory by showing that membership must be complemented by human capital and effective governance to translate into improved development outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Drawing from the empirical findings of this current study, several key conclusions can be made regarding the influence of membership diversity on the performance of CBO-supported projects in Kaptembwo informal settlement. First, the study concludes that membership diversity plays a significant but complex role in shaping project performance. Diversity in age, gender, education, ethnicity, and religion enhances the pool of knowledge, skills, and perspectives available to CBOs, thereby improving innovation and problem-solving capacity. Nonetheless, the study demonstrates that diversity is not inherently beneficial; when not effectively managed, it can generate conflict, exclusion, and power imbalances. Therefore, the positive contribution of diversity is conditional upon the presence of inclusive leadership and effective governance structures.

Secondly, the study concludes that the overall performance of CBO-supported projects can be characterized as moderate. While many projects demonstrate tangible community benefits such as improved livelihoods,

enhanced hygiene, and strengthened social cohesion challenges persist in terms of timely completion and sustainability. Moreover, the study finds that project impact is not always immediately visible, indicating that conventional performance indicators may not fully capture the broader and long-term effects of community-based interventions. In sum, the study confirms the relevance and applicability of Social Capital Theory in explaining the functioning and performance of CBO-supported projects. The findings demonstrate that membership diversity is important in facilitating collective action and enhancing project outcomes. However, the study also extends the theory by highlighting that membership diversity is context-dependent and require active management to yield optimal results within informal settlement settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sought to establish how membership diversity influences performance. Findings showed that diversity enhances innovation, inclusivity, and community reach but also creates tensions such as generational conflict, dominance by educated members, and value-based disagreements. The study concludes that diversity is a context-dependent and double-edged factor.

Based on the findings, there is need for a more detailed examination of the different dimensions of membership diversity and their individual contributions to project performance. Applying multivariate statistical techniques, such as regression analysis or structural equation modelling, could offer detailed insights into the relative influence of diversity while controlling for other organizational factors. Future research should include CBOs from multiple informal settlements or different geographical regions to improve the external validity of the findings. The authors should further explore the mechanisms underlying the observed positive impact of female participation through qualitative evidence and comparative analysis.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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