

Community Engagement and Sustainability of Programs: Basis for Enhancement

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between community engagement and the sustainability of programs in one of the industries as a basis for an enhancement research study. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 100 community residents through a validated researcher-made questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that respondents were predominantly female, aged 31–40 years, and belonged to low-income households. Both community engagement ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.45$) and sustainability of programs ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.48$) were rated Very High. Moreover, a strong positive and statistically significant relationship was found between community engagement and the sustainability of programs ($r_s = 0.726$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher community engagement is associated with greater program sustainability. The study concludes that community engagement is significantly and positively associated with the perceived sustainability of community development programs. However, because the study employed a descriptive-correlational design and relied primarily on respondents' perceptions, the findings do not establish a causal relationship between community engagement and program sustainability. The findings provide a basis for strengthening community participation, stakeholder collaboration, transparency, and community ownership while recognizing the need for broader and longitudinal investigations using objective measures of program sustainability.

Keywords: Community Engagement; Program Sustainability; Community Participation; Stakeholder Empowerment; Community Development Programs; Community Ownership; Stakeholder Collaboration; Program Enhancement.

INTRODUCTION

Community engagement is widely recognized as a fundamental element in achieving sustainable development and ensuring the long-term success of community-based programs. It refers to the process of involving individuals, groups, and organizations in decision-making and implementation activities that affect their well-being and development. Citizen participation is a form of empowerment that enables communities to influence decisions and share responsibility for programs that directly affect them. Genuine participation fosters ownership, accountability, and commitment among stakeholders, which are essential factors in sustaining development initiatives over time. (Arnstein, et al., 2023)

Over the years, various scholars have emphasized the importance of community participation in development programs. Explained that participation ranges from passive involvement to self-mobilization, wherein community members take the lead in initiating and sustaining actions. Higher levels of participation contribute to stronger local ownership and increased likelihood of program continuity. (Pretty et al., 2022)

It was highlighted the role of social capital, noting that trust, cooperation, and networks among community members enhance collective action and promote sustainable outcomes.

The concept of sustainability has become increasingly important in both public and private sector programs. The United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In program implementation, sustainability refers to the capacity of initiatives to continue delivering benefits and achieving objectives even after external support, funding, or direct intervention has ended. Sustainable programs are characterized by community ownership, effective partnerships, resource mobilization, and institutional support.

Existing research generally indicates a positive association between meaningful community engagement and the sustainability of community-based initiatives. However, the strength and nature of this association may vary according to contextual conditions, including leadership, institutional capacity, resource availability, stakeholder commitment, governance arrangements, and organizational support. Thus, community engagement should be viewed as one component of a broader system of factors that may contribute to program continuity and sustainability. When communities actively participate in identifying needs, planning interventions, implementing activities, and evaluating results, they are more likely to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility toward program outcomes. Studies have found that community involvement increases the relevance, effectiveness, and longevity of development projects while reducing dependency on external resources. Conversely, limited participation often leads to weak community commitment, reduced program effectiveness, and eventual discontinuation of initiatives.

In the context of corporate social responsibility (CSR), community development, and sustainability programs, stakeholder engagement has become a critical strategy for creating meaningful and lasting impacts. Organizations increasingly recognize that sustainable development cannot be achieved through a top-down approach alone. Rather, it requires active collaboration among beneficiaries, government agencies, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and private sector partners. Such partnerships strengthen resource sharing, build local capacities, and enhance the sustainability of programs.

Despite the acknowledged importance of community engagement, many organizations continue to face challenges in sustaining their programs. Issues such as inadequate participation, lack of stakeholder commitment, insufficient communication, and limited capacity-building efforts may hinder long-term success. Understanding how community engagement influences program sustainability is therefore essential for developing more effective strategies and interventions.

Although previous studies have established the importance of community participation in supporting sustainable development, several gaps remain. Much of the existing evidence is based on cross-sectional assessments and self-reported perceptions, which provide limited information about whether program outcomes are sustained over extended periods. In addition, sustainability may be influenced by factors beyond community engagement, including leadership effectiveness, availability of resources, stakeholder commitment, governance quality, and organizational support. These factors may shape the capacity of communities and implementing organizations to maintain programs after initial implementation or external assistance has declined. Furthermore, evidence drawn from a single community may not adequately represent the experiences of communities with different socioeconomic, institutional, and organizational contexts. These limitations highlight the need for broader studies involving multiple communities, probability-based samples, longitudinal designs, mixed-method approaches, and objective indicators of program sustainability.

Against this backdrop, the present study entitled “Community Engagement and Sustainability of Programs: Basis for Enhancement” sought to determine the perceived level of community engagement and sustainability of programs and to examine the association between these variables within the selected community. The study also aimed to identify areas that may be strengthened to support community participation, local ownership, stakeholder collaboration, and the continuity of community development initiatives.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study, including the research design, respondents, population and sample size, sampling technique, research instrument, validity and reliability, data-gathering procedures,

and statistical treatment of data. The methodology was designed to systematically examine community engagement and the sustainability of programs.

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to determine the level of community engagement and sustainability of programs and examine the relationship between these variables. The quantitative approach allowed the researcher to collect numerical data and analyze them statistically, while the descriptive-correlational design enabled the researcher to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between community engagement and program sustainability without manipulating the variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The respondents of the study were 100 community stakeholders, consisting of Barangay Health Workers, Barangay Leaders and Council members, and Sangguniang Kabataan members from one barangay in the city. These respondents were selected because they were directly involved in or familiar with the implementation and support of community programs. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants to ensure that those included in the study could provide relevant information concerning community engagement and program sustainability.

A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary data-gathering instrument. It was developed to measure the respondents' perceptions of community engagement and sustainability of programs using a five-point Likert scale. To establish content validity, the instrument was evaluated by a panel of five experts, composed of three public department heads and two public leaders. The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) developed by Lawshe was used to assess the relevance and essentiality of the questionnaire items. The revised instrument was then pilot-tested among 40 respondents who had characteristics similar to the actual respondents but were not included in the main study. The questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.954, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming its reliability for data collection.

For the data-gathering procedure, the researcher first secured permission from the concerned barangay officials. After approval, the purpose and significance of the study were explained to the respondents, and confidentiality of their responses was assured. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires and provided clear instructions on how to accomplish them. After the respondents completed the questionnaires, these were retrieved, checked for completeness, organized, and prepared for statistical analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and socioeconomic status. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of community engagement and sustainability of programs. The responses were interpreted using a five-point Likert scale, where a mean score of 4.21–5.00 indicated Strongly Agree and 1.00–1.80 indicated Strongly Disagree. Finally, the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient (Spearman's rho) was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between community engagement and sustainability of programs at the 0.05 level of significance. This provided the basis for determining the strength and direction of the association between the two variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Frequency and Percent Distribution of the Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Profile	Category	f	%
Sex			
	Male	20.00	20.00
	Female	80.00	80.00
	Total	100.00	100.00
Age			
	20 years old and below	2	2.00

	21-30 years old	15	15.00
	31-40 years old	63	63.00
	41-50 years old	10	10.00
	51 years old and above	10	10.00
	Total	100	100.00
Socioeconomic Status			
	Low Income (Php 24,060 and below)	90	90.00
	Lower Middle Income (Php 24,061 - Php 48,120)	10	10.00
	Middle Income (Php 48,121 - Php 84,210)	0	0
	Upper Middle (Php 84,211 - Php 144,360)	0	0
	Upper Income (Php 144,361 and above)	0	0
	Total	100	100.00

The table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 100 respondents in terms of sex, age and socio - economic status. In terms of sex, the majority of the respondents are female with 80 respondents (f= 80,80%), while the 20 respondents (f= 20, 20%) are male. This indicates that female is more actively involved in the community programs.

This research suggest that women are often more active in community programs because they are more likely to engage in activities that promote the well-being of families and communities, including health, education, nutrition, and social welfare (United Nations Women, 2023).

Concerning age, the largest group of respondents belongs to the 31-40 years old category, consisting of 63 respondents (f= 63, 63%), followed by those aged 21 to 30 years old with 15 respondents (f=15,15%). Meanwhile, 10 respondents aged(f=10,10%) 41-40 years old age bracket while the same figure applies to 51-years old and above with 10 respondents (f=10,10%). On the other hand, 20 years old and below age bracket represent the smallest respondent with 2, (f=2,2%).

This distribution indicates that the active participation of women in community contributes to stronger social cohesion, increased civic engagement, and more sustainable community development outcomes (United Nations Women, 2023).

In terms of socio -economic status, the overwhelming majority of engaged community comes from the 90 respondents (f=90,90%) with Php 24,060.00 low-income bracket. Subsequently, survey shows there are 10 respondents (f=10,10%) with Php 24, 06.00 – Php 48,120.00 considers as lower income.

This research suggests that respondents with lower socioeconomic status demonstrated higher levels of community engagement. This may be because community programs provide valuable opportunities to access essential services, livelihood support, health interventions, educational assistance, and other resources that contribute to improving their quality of life. As a result, lower-income individuals may be more motivated to participate actively in initiatives that address their immediate needs while fostering stronger social connections and community resilience (World Bank, 2022; UNDP, 2022).

Level of Community Engagement of the Respondents

Table 2. Level of Community Engagement of the Respondents.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Regularly consults community members before implementing community programs.	4.59	0.64	Very High
2. Residents are encouraged to participate in community activities organized by the company.	4.64	0.61	Very High
3. The company values the opinions and suggestions of community members.	4.33	0.80	Very High
4. Community meetings conducted by the company are accessible to residents.	4.49	0.75	Very High
5. Information about the company's community programs is communicated clearly.	4.49	0.70	Very High
6. The company responds promptly to community concerns.	4.40	0.75	Very High
7. Residents are actively involved in planning community projects.	4.69	0.58	Very High
8. The company maintains a positive relationship with local residents.	4.62	0.60	Very High
9. Community members feel respected during company-led activities.	4.59	0.62	Very High
10. The company collaborates with local leaders in implementing projects.	4.60	0.62	Very High
11. Community activities encourage volunteerism among residents.	4.69	0.51	Very High
12. The company promotes partnerships with local organizations.	4.58	0.62	Very High
13. Residents feel that their participation makes a difference in community programs.	4.49	0.59	Very High
14. The company demonstrates transparency in its community initiatives.	4.32	0.85	Very High
15. Company effectively engages with the local community.	4.36	0.69	Very High
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Overall Mean)	4.53	0.45	Very High

Legend: (4.21-5.00)-Very High; (3.41-4.20)-High; (2.61-3.40)-Moderate; (1.81-2.60)-Low; (1.00-1.80)-Very Low

Table 2 presents the respondents' assessment of the Company's level of community engagement. The results reveal an overall mean of 4.53 (SD = 0.45), interpreted as Very High, indicating that the Company demonstrates an excellent level of engagement with the community. This suggests that respondents strongly perceive the Company as actively involving community members in decision-making, maintaining open communication, fostering collaboration, and promoting meaningful participation in its community development initiatives.

Among the indicators, "Residents are actively involved in planning community projects" (Item 7) and "Community activities encourage volunteerism among residents" (Item 11) obtained the highest mean score of 4.69 (SD = 0.58 and SD = 0.51, respectively), both interpreted as Very High. These findings indicate that the Company effectively empowers community members by encouraging their participation in the planning and implementation of community projects while fostering a strong culture of volunteerism. This demonstrates that community engagement extends beyond consultation, allowing residents to become active partners in the Company's social responsibility initiatives.

The statement "Residents are encouraged to participate in community activities organized by the company" (Item 2) ranked next with a mean of 4.64 (SD = 0.61), followed by "The company maintains a positive relationship with local residents" (Item 8) with a mean of 4.62 (SD = 0.60), "The company collaborates with local leaders in implementing projects" (Item 10) with a mean of 4.60 (SD = 0.62), and "Regularly consults community members before implementing community programs" (Item 1) and "Community members feel respected during company-led activities" (Item 9), both with a mean of 4.59. These consistently high ratings suggest that the Company values stakeholder participation, maintains strong partnerships with local leaders, and ensures that community members are treated with respect throughout program implementation.

Similarly, respondents highly agreed that the Company promotes partnerships with local organizations (M = 4.58, SD = 0.62), conducts accessible community meetings (M = 4.49, SD = 0.75), communicates information about community programs clearly (M = 4.49, SD = 0.70), and that their participation makes a difference in community programs (M = 4.49, SD = 0.59). These findings imply that the Company has established effective communication channels and collaborative partnerships that encourage community participation and strengthen stakeholder trust.

Meanwhile, the statements "The company responds promptly to community concerns" (M = 4.40, SD = 0.75), "Company effectively engages with the local community" (M = 4.36, SD = 0.69), "The company values the opinions and suggestions of community members" (M = 4.33, SD = 0.80), and "The company demonstrates transparency in its community initiatives" (M = 4.32, SD = 0.85) received the relatively lowest mean scores, although all remained within the Very High descriptive level. These results indicate that while respondents generally have a highly positive perception of the Company's engagement efforts, there remains an opportunity to further strengthen transparency, responsiveness, and mechanisms for incorporating community feedback into program implementation.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the Company has successfully established a participatory and collaborative approach to community engagement. The consistently Very High ratings across all indicators suggest that the Company actively consults, informs, involves, and collaborates with community stakeholders, thereby fostering trust, strengthening partnerships, and promoting sustainable community development. These findings support the stakeholder engagement framework, which emphasizes that meaningful participation and collaboration are essential in ensuring the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of community development and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.

Level of Sustainability of Programs in One of the Industries

Table 3. Level of Sustainability of Programs in One of the Industries.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The company's community programs continue to benefit residents over time.	4.26	0.79	Very High
2. Community projects are designed to produce long-term positive impacts.	4.26	0.81	Very High
3. The company provides adequate resources to sustain its community programs.	4.33	0.82	Very High
4. Residents are trained to continue program activities independently.	4.31	0.69	Very High
5. Environmental protection is considered in community projects.	4.49	0.64	Very High
6. The programs encourage responsible use of local resources.	4.53	0.61	Very High
7. Community members are motivated to maintain completed projects.	4.54	0.59	Very High
8. The company promotes environmentally friendly practices.	4.56	0.59	Very High
9. The programs contribute to improving the community's quality of life.	4.58	0.62	Very High

10. The company regularly monitors the sustainability of its projects.	4.24	0.81	Very High
11. Community programs support local economic development.	4.37	0.60	Very High
12. The projects continue even after the company's initial involvement.	4.19	0.86	High
13. Residents are empowered to take ownership of community initiatives.	4.35	0.61	Very High
14. The company demonstrates commitment to long-term community development.	4.21	0.76	Very High
15. Overall, the company's community programs are sustainable.	4.31	0.72	Very High
SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRAMS (Overall Mean)	4.37	0.48	Very High

Legend: (4.21-5.00)-Very High; (3.41-4.20)-High; (2.61-3.40)-Moderate; (1.81-2.60)-Low; (1.00-1.80)-Very Low

Table 3 presents the respondents' assessment of the level of sustainability of programs implemented by one of the industries. The results reveal an overall mean of 4.37 (SD = 0.48), which is interpreted as Very High. This indicates that respondents strongly perceive the Company's community programs as sustainable and capable of generating long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits. The findings suggest that the Company has successfully integrated sustainability principles into its community development initiatives, ensuring that programs continue to create value beyond their initial implementation.

Among the indicators, "The programs contribute to improving the community's quality of life" (Item 9) obtained the highest mean of 4.58 (SD = 0.62), interpreted as Very High. This finding indicates that the Company's programs have made a significant positive impact on the well-being of community members by improving access to opportunities, services, and resources that enhance their quality of life. This suggests that the Company's corporate social responsibility initiatives effectively address community needs and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development.

The second highest-rated indicator was "The company promotes environmentally friendly practices" (Item 8) with a mean of 4.56 (SD = 0.59), followed by "Community members are motivated to maintain completed projects" (Item 7) with a mean of 4.54 (SD = 0.59), and "The programs encourage responsible use of local resources" (Item 6) with a mean of 4.53 (SD = 0.61). These findings demonstrate that the Company places strong emphasis on environmental stewardship and encourages community ownership of development projects. By promoting environmentally responsible practices and motivating residents to maintain completed initiatives, the Company helps ensure the long-term sustainability of its community programs.

Similarly, respondents gave Very High ratings to "Environmental protection is considered in community projects" (M = 4.49, SD = 0.64), "Community programs support local economic development" (M = 4.37, SD = 0.60), "Residents are empowered to take ownership of community initiatives" (M = 4.35, SD = 0.61), and "The company provides adequate resources to sustain its community programs" (M = 4.33, SD = 0.82). These results suggest that the Company's initiatives extend beyond short-term assistance by promoting environmental conservation, strengthening local economies, building community capacity, and providing the necessary resources for sustained program implementation.

Furthermore, respondents agreed that "Residents are trained to continue program activities independently" (M = 4.31, SD = 0.69) and that "Overall, the company's community programs are sustainable" (M = 4.31, SD = 0.72), both interpreted as Very High. These findings imply that the Company equips community members with the knowledge and skills needed to continue program activities independently, thereby enhancing local ownership and ensuring the continuity of development initiatives.

On the other hand, the statements "Community projects are designed to produce long-term positive impacts" ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.81$), "The company's community programs continue to benefit residents over time" ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.79$), "The company regularly monitors the sustainability of its projects" ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.81$), and "The company demonstrates commitment to long-term community development" ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.76$) received comparatively lower, yet still Very High, ratings. These findings indicate that while respondents recognize the Company's commitment to sustainability, there remains an opportunity to strengthen long-term monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure the continued effectiveness and impact of community programs.

The statement "The projects continue even after the company's initial involvement" obtained the lowest mean score of 4.19 ($SD = 0.86$), although it remained within the High descriptive level. This finding is noteworthy because continued operation after the withdrawal or reduction of external support represents an important practical dimension of program sustainability. While respondents generally perceived that the programs continued beyond the Company's initial involvement, the comparatively lower rating suggests that continuity may remain an area requiring further strengthening. This finding may point to the importance of developing mechanisms for local leadership, resource mobilization, stakeholder commitment, institutional support, and post-project monitoring. However, because the present study relied on respondents' perceptions, the finding should not be interpreted as objective evidence that all programs have continued over time. Future assessments should verify program continuity using documented records and longitudinal monitoring.

Overall, the findings indicate that the Company's community programs are perceived to be highly sustainable, particularly in promoting environmental stewardship, community ownership, responsible resource management, and improvements in the quality of life of beneficiaries. The consistently high ratings demonstrate that the Company has established effective sustainability practices that create lasting positive impacts on host communities. However, continued efforts to strengthen local ownership, post-project monitoring, and institutional capacity will further enhance the long-term success and sustainability of these initiatives.

Relationship between the Community Engagement and Sustainability of Programs

Table 4. Relationship between the Community Engagement and Sustainability of Programs.

Variable	Test Statistics (r_s)	p-value	Decision for H_0	Interpretation
Community Engagement vs. Sustainability of Programs	0.726**	<0.001	Reject H_0	Significant

Table 4 presents the results of the Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation (Spearman's rho) conducted to determine the relationship between community engagement and the sustainability of programs in one of the industries. The analysis yielded a Spearman's rho (r_s) of 0.726 with a p-value of < 0.001 , indicating a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables. Since the computed p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

The significant positive correlation indicates that higher levels of community engagement were associated with higher levels of perceived program sustainability among the respondents. The magnitude of the correlation ($r_s = .726$) indicates a strong positive association between the variables. This finding suggests that communities reporting stronger participation, collaboration, consultation, and ownership also tended to report higher levels of program sustainability. However, the correlational nature of the analysis does not establish that community engagement directly causes program sustainability. Other factors, such as leadership effectiveness, availability of resources, stakeholder commitment, governance quality, and organizational support, may also contribute to differences in sustainability. These factors were not examined in the present study and therefore represent important areas for future investigation.

The findings imply that meaningful community engagement plays a vital role in ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of community programs. When residents are given opportunities to express their views, participate in decision-making, and collaborate with the company and local leaders, they develop a greater sense of ownership and responsibility toward community projects. This increased commitment motivates community members to maintain completed projects, support ongoing initiatives, and contribute to the long-term success of development programs.

Limitations Of The Study

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of the study. First, the study involved only 100 respondents from one barangay; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other communities with different socioeconomic, organizational, and institutional conditions. Second, purposive sampling was used, which may have limited the representativeness of the respondents and introduced the possibility of selection bias. Third, the study employed a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design, which captured community engagement and program sustainability at a particular point in time and therefore could not determine whether the observed association remained stable over an extended period. Fourth, sustainability was assessed primarily through respondents' perceptions rather than through independently verified or objective indicators of program continuity and outcomes. Finally, the study focused on the association between community engagement and sustainability and did not examine other potentially relevant factors such as leadership effectiveness, resource availability, stakeholder commitment, governance quality, and organizational support. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the results and applying them to other contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the previous findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

The findings indicate that community program participation is predominantly composed of females (80%), individuals aged 31–40 years old (63%), and respondents from lower-income households (90%). This suggests that women, particularly those in the productive adult age group and from lower-income communities, play a significant role in community programs. Their strong participation reflects their active involvement in addressing community needs and supporting initiatives that contribute to community development and well-being.

The finding indicates that the company's community programs are perceived by residents as sustainable and capable of providing continuing benefits to the community. This suggests that the programs are being implemented effectively and have the potential to create lasting positive outcomes.

The finding indicates that the company's community programs are perceived by residents as sustainable and capable of providing continuing benefits to the community. This suggests that the programs are being implemented effectively and have the potential to create lasting positive outcomes.

The respondents perceived the sustainability of the Company's community programs as Very High ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.48$). The findings indicate favorable perceptions regarding the programs' capacity to provide continuing benefits, promote environmental responsibility, encourage community ownership, and support local development. However, these results represent respondents' perceptions and should not be interpreted as objective verification of long-term program sustainability. A strong, positive, and statistically significant association was found between community engagement and perceived program sustainability ($r_s = .726$, $p < .001$). Thus, respondents who reported higher levels of community engagement also tended to report higher levels of program sustainability. The result demonstrates an association between the variables but does not establish a causal effect. Other contextual and organizational factors may also be related to program sustainability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and limitations of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Expand the study population and research setting. Future researchers should include a larger number of respondents from multiple barangays, municipalities, or communities to obtain broader evidence and improve the representativeness and external validity of the findings. Including communities with different socioeconomic and organizational characteristics may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of community engagement and program sustainability.
2. Employ probability sampling techniques. Future studies should consider probability-based sampling procedures, such as stratified random sampling or multistage sampling, to provide greater representation of different stakeholder groups and reduce the possibility of selection bias.
3. Adopt mixed-method research approaches. Future researchers may combine quantitative surveys with qualitative methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and key-informant interviews. Qualitative evidence can provide deeper explanations of how community members experience participation, ownership, collaboration, and challenges in sustaining programs.
4. Examine additional explanatory variables. Future studies should investigate variables that may be associated with program sustainability, including leadership effectiveness, resource availability, stakeholder commitment, governance quality, organizational support, communication, institutional capacity, and community ownership. Examining these variables may provide a more comprehensive explanation of differences in program sustainability.
5. Conduct longitudinal studies. Future researchers should consider longitudinal research designs that follow community programs across several periods or stages of implementation. Such designs can determine whether perceived sustainability and community engagement remain consistent over time and can provide stronger evidence regarding program continuity.
6. Include objective measures of sustainability. Researchers should supplement perception-based questionnaires with documented and observable indicators, such as project continuation after external support, maintenance records, resource or budget continuity, participation records, beneficiary outcomes, program completion, and other verifiable measures of sustained implementation.
7. Strengthen post-project monitoring and evaluation. Program implementers should establish systematic mechanisms for monitoring projects after their initial implementation or after external support has decreased. Particular attention should be given to the continuation of projects, local resource mobilization, community leadership, and maintenance responsibilities.
8. Strengthen local ownership and leadership capacity. Since the sustainability dimension concerning continuation after the Company's initial involvement received the lowest mean among the indicators, program implementers should strengthen community leadership, capacity-building activities, and mechanisms that enable residents to independently manage and maintain community initiatives.
9. Improve the transparency and responsiveness of community engagement. The relatively lower ratings for transparency, responsiveness, and incorporation of community feedback indicate areas that may be strengthened. Regular consultations, feedback mechanisms, participatory planning, and transparent communication should be institutionalized to support meaningful stakeholder participation.
10. Update the theoretical and empirical foundations of future studies. Future researchers should incorporate more recent peer-reviewed literature and contemporary evidence on community engagement, stakeholder participation, sustainability, governance, organizational support, and community development. Current

literature should be synthesized thematically rather than presented primarily on a citation-by-citation basis.

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