

Factors affecting Youth Employment in Ngong and Rongai Wards in Kajiado North Constituency, Kajiado County, Kenya

John Njenga Mbugua
Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership
School of Business and Economics
Africa International University, Kenya
Johnnjenga2025@gmail.com

Supervisors
Prof Beatrice Warue
Dean School of Business & Economics
Africa International University
Njerubatrice1@gmail.com

Dr. Edward Kobuthi
Senior Lecturer
Africa International University
ekobuthi70@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study analyzed factors affecting youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards in Kajiado North Constituency, Kenya. The study was guided by four specific objectives: to find out national and county government initiatives' effect on youth employment; establish whether life-skills training affects youth employment; examine whether cultural dynamics affects youth employment; and find out whether mentorship training affected youth employment. The study applied the descriptive research design targeting a population of 33,326 respondents consisting of the two youth officers in Kajiado North Sub-County and youth from the 2 wards in which 395 participants were selected using stratified simple random sampling. The data was collected using primary and secondary sources, where a questionnaire was used to gather data. The results showed that a majority of the youths were not employed. The correlation results indicated that there was a positive and statistically significant association between government interventions, life skills, cultural dynamics, mentorship training, and youth employment implying that these variables moved in the same direction. The linear regression analysis revealed that the model was statistically significant as shown by $p=0.000$. The report for regression results showed a significance level of less than 0.05. An increase in government interventions and mentorship training resulted in an increase in youth employment and this was statistically significant ($P=0.000$) An increase in life skills resulted in an increase in youth employment ($P=0.149$). An increase in cultural dynamics resulted in a reduction in youth employment but this was not significant with the value of ($P=0.959$). The study recommends that monitoring and evaluation of county and national government interventions be carried out, enforcement of mentorship programs through regulatory framework and provision of more information on how to implement and measure a mentorship program.

Key Words

Life skills, Youth, Culture, Leadership, Mentor, Employability skills

Introduction

The unemployment of young people is not just a developing nation or local problem but is a global problem and therefore needs both local and global solutions. The unemployment of youth is estimated as three times higher than adult unemployment, and four out of every ten people who are unemployed around the world are youth which has been attributed to the unavailability of sustainable and decent work opportunities (Ayhan, 2016). The International Labor Organization (2006) has defined youth as a person aged fifteen to twenty-four but this definition varies across countries in the operational definitions and these have different impacts for compatibility. The African Youth Charter of the African Union defined youth as people between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five (African Union Commission, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Employment among the youth in Kenya has long been a continuous challenge both to the national and county governments. This contributes towards the increasing numbers of the unemployed youths in both Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards, Kajiado North Constituency, Kajiado County in Kenya. As a result, the impact has unending challenges not only to the individuals themselves and their families but also to the society.

Some of the efforts have been to recruit many youths into the national youth service programs around the country, Ajira, through the ministry of ICT, providing soft loans through youth funds as well as Uwezo funds to groups of young people interested in doing business. Yet, after all these efforts have been put in place, still there are many youths with approximately 8.7 % in Ngong and 8.9 % in Ongata Rongai wards who remain jobless and without something substantial to do in order to earn a living (KNBS, 2013). The outcry over unemployment of youth continues to be heard especially when crimes, suicidal cases, and mental health cases continue to be reported on national broadcasting news on a regular basis. This study sought to focus on two wards within Kajiado North Constituency Kajiado County in Kenya and the aim was to examine factors that affect youth employment in both Ngong and Ongata Rongai Wards.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to analyze factors affecting youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards in Kajiado North Constituency, Kajiado County in Kenya.

Specific Objectives

- i. To investigate whether national and county government initiatives have an effect on youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards
- ii. To establish whether life-skills training affect youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards
- iii. To examine whether cultural dynamics influence youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards

- iv. To find out whether mentorship training affects youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards

Theoretical framework

The study was based on Fieldler's (1967) Situational Leadership Theory and the Kirkpatrick's (1959) Leadership Theory.

Situational Leadership Theory

Fieldler (1967) developed a contingency or situational theory which was further developed by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey in 1969. The situational model of leadership asserts that leaders should not rely on one management style for every situation and calls for different leadership styles for every management situation. The main argument of the theory is for leaders and managers to be flexible in leadership styles so as to achieve the best results from staff and teams under their supervision (Aloysius, 2018). The dynamics of high rates of unemployment may require a situational theory of leadership because such challenges may not rely on just one way in order to bring change. This theory can come in handy for the county youth leadership to explore other management styles to mitigate youth challenges in the constituency. Similarly, when it comes to the dynamics of culture and traditional customs, situational leadership can be instrumental to exploring multiple solutions to the challenges affecting youth employment in the constituency.

Kirkpatrick Leadership Theory

The Kirkpatrick Leadership Theory was developed by Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (1998) who identified four levels of evaluating training effectiveness: reaction, learning, behaviours, and results (outcomes). These levels of the training evaluation process measure the attitudes of the trainees at the end of a training program (Ngure, 2018). Trainees who have considerably acquired knowledge and skills from the training were likely to apply it to their work, and hence have a positive reaction. This could be used to measure the motivation, expectations and general attitudes of the staff. Though subjective, reactions give feedback on training content and style (Ngure, 2018).

Second, achievement learning objectives are a method of evaluating skills and knowledge gained through a training program which will contribute to an improvement in job performance. Third, work-related behavioural variations reproduced in performance refer to levels which involve evaluating difference in staff work-related behaviours (Yegon, 2016). The fourth level of Kirkpatrick's model concerns itself with the impact of development and training on the firm. The evaluation is based on the idea that human resources training and development must indicate the organization's strategy and culture (Yegon, 2016). This model can be used by constituency leadership as well as county government to evaluate their training programs related to leadership development and mentoring of the youth into the job market.

Empirical Literature

Empirical Review

An empirical review refers to assessment of studies collected and analysed primary data based on direct observation or experiences in the field. This section of the empirical review is in line with research variables and objectives of this study.

Government Initiatives and Youth Employment

In Kenya, Njeri and Mutundu (2021) assessed the effect of Youth Enterprise Development Fund on the promotion of youth owned business enterprises in Kenya focusing on youth groups in Nakuru East sub-county, Nakuru County, Kenya. Their study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study results revealed that the independent variables (marketing and linkages, capacity building, and financial support) had a huge influence on the variation of the growth of the youth owned enterprises.

In Zimbabwe, Hlungwani, Masuku, and Magidi (2021) assessed the mainstreaming youth policy by exploring the compatibility of these policies in a rural context, the researchers purposively selected and interviewed the youths involved in policy implementation and self-help projects (respectively). The in-depth and key informant interviews were transcribed and analysed in line with the thematic concerns of the article. Secondary data on youth empowerment policies in Zimbabwe were used to corroborate the findings. Amongst a host of shortcomings noted within the policy framework, was the issue of how there is little to no consultation in formulating, designing and implementing policies. Secondly, while poor coordination between actor organizations has debilitated delivery, corruption and a shortage of funds also hamper implementation.

Life Skills Training and Employment

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines life skills as the capabilities for adapting positive behaviours or actions that allow persons to effectively address the challenges and demands of daily life (Pick et al., 2010). In a study conducted in the United States, Swank and Huber (2013) did a study on employment preparation and life skill development initiatives for high school students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. The study aimed at evaluating the impact of four initiatives that a school counselor developed with other school personnel to promote work skills, life skills, and social and emotional development. This was designed to help students learn job skills and obtain vocational education, promote social skills, and foster self-determination. The findings showed that the development of a transition plan alone does not necessarily lead to successful employment.

In the East African Community (EAC) region, Hatibu and Hafidh (2011) did a study on entrepreneurship factors contributing to youth employment in the EAC countries data and policy analysis. The literature review involved the collection of secondary data and information from five EAC countries, namely; Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. The primary data and information were collected using questionnaires and interviewing the respondents based on the study objectives and questions. The study found that entrepreneurship factors such as inadequate communication skills barriers contributed highly to youth unemployment in most of the EAC countries.

In a study done in Kenya, Murgor (2017) assessed the effect of soft skills on self-employment among technical and vocational education and training technician graduates in Kenya. This study was based on pragmatic research paradigm using embedded research design. The study targeted 527 technician graduates from TVET institutions in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The generic skills tested were ranked from highly perceived as good to the least good: time management, ability to solve problems, ability to work autonomously, interpersonal skills, communication skills, decision-making, creativity and innovative skills, and adaptability. However, despite time management being ranked the highest, it had no effect on self-employment. Regression results revealed that ability to solve problems, ability to work independently, interpersonal skills, adaptability and creativity and innovations have a positive and significant effect on self-employment.

Cultural Dynamics

In South Africa, Marschke (2020) compiled a report on the employment statistics which reveal a significant gap between ethnicities that persists today, which is also reflected in employment figures. While only 50% of Black youth have a job, most (87%) Whites enjoy employment. In between these, however, are those of mixed race at 59% and Indian/Asian at 81%. In addition, the level of discouragement is seven times higher for Blacks than it is for Whites. Black Africans have the worst starting point regarding employment. Only half of the youth have a job and the level of desperation is high, where every seventh Black youth has given up on finding a job. One in three mixed race youth are looking for a job, while every twelfth has given up looking for one. Eight out of ten Indian/Asians have a job, of those that do not have a job, about half have given up. Nearly nine out of ten young Whites have a job.

In Kenya, Gitau et al. (2016) collected baseline data on the causes and effects of child marriage, teenage pregnancy and FGM/C, to inform context-specific interventions in Kajiado County. The study used a mixed methods approach. A standard survey tool was used to collect quantitative data and qualitative data were collected using focus group discussions (FGDs). The survey was conducted among 1,368 youth. Thirteen FGDs, seventeen in-depth interviews, and five key informant interviews were conducted with health workers, administrative leaders, and non-governmental organization staff. The results revealed that the majority of respondents (82%) reported to be unemployed. Those with a form of employment were either casual/part-time labourers, self-employed, or in informal trade.

Mentorship

In a Nigerian study, Ajufo (2013) examined the issue of youth unemployment and looked at potential interventions such as effective career guidance, technical and vocational education as well as entrepreneurship education. A number of recommendations were made which include that youths should be trained to possess skills which are congruent with real labour market demands, developing a special focus on career guidance and counselling support in schools and introduction of entrepreneurship education into the school curriculum.

In a study conducted in Kenya, Hongo (2007) examined the characteristics of self-employed youth in service provision and trade sectors in Ngong-Hills Town. The study was carried out to provide information on background characteristics of the self-employed youth in services and trade, and to establish the extent to which the youth self-employment activities

alleviate poverty. The findings indicated that a common factors that motivating the youth into self-employment activities was desire to be like role models. The findings also showed that most of the youth prefer being well-groomed while imitating their role models, and are highly adaptable to change.

Muchiri (2013) examined the role of mentorship in enhancing youth employability adopting both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Seventy respondents including key informants from government ministries responsible for education and youth, corporate leaders, religious institutions, parents and the community were sampled. The study found that mentorship opportunities provided the youth with the ability to focus on their future positively. The study concluded that youth exposed to mentorship increased their competitiveness in the job market, hence making mentoring an important link between formal education and the job market.

Youth Employment

Taken from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) statistics on youth employment, in 2016, more than three in four young workers had informal jobs in 2016. Informal jobs are the norm for young women and men in Southern Asia, where, in 2016, it affected more than 95 percent of employed youth. Informal work is less widespread, but still significant, in Northern America and Northern, Southern and Western Europe, where it affected, respectively, 12.8 and 24.7 percent of employed youth in 2016. Informality is most pervasive in sub regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, where it affects close to 96 per cent of employed youth. In 2019, 77 percent of youth were engaged in informal employment compared to the remaining 23 percent in formal employment (ILO, 2020).

In Uganda, Msozi (2019) conducted a study entitled, “Implications of Youth Unemployment on Uganda’s National Security.” This study consisted of reviewing literature on youth unemployment and insecurity, as well as the factors responsible for youth unemployment and those factors that can lead to public security improvement. The findings show a majority of youth prefers quick ways of making money and this consequently sidelines their interest and engagement in formal employment. Moreover, the lack of capacity and skills-building in Uganda limits the entrepreneurship spirit among Ugandan youth with implications for unemployment. The feeling of incapacitation coupled with the lack of business culture means we have fewer youth opening their own enterprises in preference of formal employment.

In Kenya, Otiende et al. (2020) assessed how youth empowerment programmes have influenced availability of jobs to the youth in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study applied the entrepreneurship innovation theory, the theory of youth empowerment, and the youth livelihood and employment theory of change. The sample population was 120 respondents. The study established that young people in Nairobi County have obtained loans from the Youth Enterprise Development Fund and embarked on starting their own business.

Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design. The design was suitable for this study as the researcher aimed to describe the population in terms of the independent and dependent variables. The units in this case were chosen due to the relevance of the information and characteristics they possess (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). The Ngong and Ongata Rongai

Wards were purposively selected as the units of analysis. These wards were selected owing to their high population of youth and also their proximity to each other which might indicate some latent similarities in the population. Kajiado North Constituency has 66% of the working age (15-64 years) in the county which can be explained by the growth of Ngong and Ongata Rongai Wards (KNBS, 2013).

The stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select the units of observation and this was done by placing respondents of the study into unique categories from which simple random sampling was done. The population was divided into two strata: Youth in Ngong Ward and Ongata Rongai Ward. Yamane's (1967) formula was used to determine a sample size of 392 respondents as presented in Table 1.

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

Where;

n = sample size

N = study population

e = tolerance at the preferred level of confidence

$\alpha = 0.05$ at 95% confidence level.

$$\begin{aligned} n &= 33,323 / 1 + 33,323 (0.05)^2 \\ &= 33,323 / 84.315 \\ &= 392 \end{aligned}$$

Table 1: Study Sample Size

Category	Population	Sample
Youths in Ngong Ward	15,109	179
Youths in Ongata Rongai Ward	18,214	213
Total	33,326	392

A structured questionnaire and key informant interview guide were used to gather information for the study. The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Close-ended questions were used for the demographic information and a 5 – point Likert scale questions will be used to measure the variables. The researcher conducted interviews with key informants of the study which consist of two youth officers. The informant guide which was developed based on the outcome of the structured questionnaires administered to the youth.

For the quantitative data, the study used descriptive, correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The descriptive statistics used included mean, frequency distribution, and standard deviation. Pearson correlation analysis was used to measure the association between the independent and dependent variables whilst linear multiple regression analysis was used to determine the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable.

The Study Findings

Pearson Product Moment Correlation

The results of the correlation coefficients show that all the independent variables had a positive and statistically significant association with youth employment. Specifically, there was a

0.440 correlation between county and government initiatives for the youth and youth employment. There was a 0.344 correlation coefficient between life skills and youth employment. There was a 0.228 correlation coefficient between cultural dynamics and youth employment. Lastly, the findings indicate a 0.451 correlation coefficient between mentorship training and youth employment as shown in Table 2.

The findings indicate that an increase in life skills, cultural dynamics, mentorship training would yield an increase in youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai Wards. Youth with life skills are more likely to succeed in gaining income employment and if these youth are assisted through mentorship, they can also succeed in finding employment. The cultural differences among youth are also positive factors that can lead to youth employment as the chance of nepotism is reduced when cultural differences exist. With government interventions in providing jobs for the youth, this would result in greater number of youth getting employed.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient

Variables		Government interventions	Life skills	Cultural dynamics	Mentorship training
Government interventions	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1			
Life skills	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.234**	1		
Cultural dynamics	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	.494**	1	
Mentorship training	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.876	0	0	1
Youth employment	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.155*	.442**	.501**	.451**
		0.036	0.000	0.000	
		.440**	.344**	.228**	.451**
		0.000	0.000	0.002	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of determination

The model summary results show that *R* square value is 0.659. This means that the independent variables explain 65.9 % of variation on youth employment while 34.1% relevant variables were not captured by the study as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.812a	0.659	0.698	0.73456

a Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship training, Government interventions, Life skills, Cultural dynamics

ANOVA Results

The significance of a regression model is determined by the results of the ANOVA output. In this case the regression shows that the F statistics is positive and the significance value is less than 0.05 which means the model is statistically significant. This is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.096	4	10.274	24.222	.000 ^b
	Residual	75.499	178	0.424		
	Total	116.595	182			

a Dependent Variable: Youth employment

b Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship training, Government interventions, Life skills, Cultural dynamics

Linear multiple regression model

Table 5 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis which indicate that an increase in national and county government initiatives for the youth would result in a 0.417 increase in youth employment and this was statistically significant as shown by a *p* value of 0.000. An increase in life skills would result in a 0.083 increase in youth employment but this is insignificant as shown by a *p* value of 0.049. An increase in cultural dynamics yields a – 0.003 decrease in youth employment but this increase is insignificant as shown by a *p* value of 0.959. Lastly, an increase in mentorship training yields a 0.289 increase in youth employment and this is significant as shown by a *p* value of 0.000.

Table 5.: Linear Multiple regression results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	0.475	0.267		1.782	0.076
	Government interventions	0.417	0.073	0.361	5.742	0.000
	Life skills	0.083	0.057	0.107	1.449	0.049
	Cultural dynamics	-0.003	0.067	-0.004	-0.052	0.959
	Mentorship training	0.289	0.060	0.349	4.81	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Youth employment

Discussions of Results

The findings show that county and national government interventions have a positive effect on youth employment. Similarly, mentorship training appeared to have positive effect on youth employment. In terms of the relationship between government interventions and youth employment, the findings agree with Muiya's (2014) research which found that the government has so far implemented various interventions to address the challenge of youth employment through human capital development. The outcomes of this study also corroborate the results of

Wanjohi's (2014) research on key issues and interventions of youth unemployment in Kenya who found that interventions to the problems facing youth included the following: initiating self-help groups, increasing youth funding channels, supporting entertainment industry, introducing informal entrepreneurship training programs, organizing youth retreats, initiating and supporting income generating projects. This is the blueprint according to which the major government interventions for youth employment are modeled. The study concluded that youth exposed to mentorship increased their competitiveness in the job market, hence making mentoring an important link between formal education and the job market.

Conclusions

The first objective of the study was to investigate whether national and county government initiatives have an effect on youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards, Kajiado North Constituency, Kajiado County in Kenya. The findings from the regression indicate that an increase in national and county government initiatives would result in youth employment. The study therefore concludes that national and county government initiatives have an impact on youth employment in Ongata Rongai and Ngong Wards in Kajiado County, North Constituency. The second objective of the study was to establish whether life-skills training affect youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards. The findings indicate that life skills had a positive influence on employability of youth. The study therefore concludes that life skills have an effect on youth employment in the two wards.

The third objective of the study examined whether cultural dynamics influence youth employment in the two aforementioned wards. The study therefore concludes that cultural dynamics do not have an effect on youth employment in Ongata Rongai and Ngong Wards. The two wards being cosmopolitan modernized towns are increasingly and significantly suppressing the traditional and cultural practices that affect youth employment. The fourth objective of the study was to find out whether mentorship training affect youth employment in Ngong and Ongata Rongai wards. The findings from the regression indicate that an increase in mentorship training would result in youth employment. The study therefore concludes that mentorship training has an impact on youth employment in Ongata Rongai and Ngong Wards, Kajiado North Constituency, Kajiado County in Kenya.

Recommendations

There have been various interventions by the Kenyan and county governments to address the challenge of youth employment through human capital development like the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEPF).

1. There is need for a monitoring and evaluation of county and national government interventions for youth employment so as to understand the impact of these initiatives on youth employment.
2. There is need for enforcement of mentorship programs through regulatory framework.
3. There is need for more information on how to implement and measure a mentorship program so that positive role models can help youth better understand business and

financial responsibilities learn business and financial skills hence gain greater self-confidence for taking on more responsibilities.

4. Since the effects of culture and cultural practices did not appear to be one of the major factors, it will be necessary to have more investigations on different homogeneous units of practices that could be affecting youth and youth employment in Ongata Rongai and Ngong wards in Kajiado North Constituency in Kajiado County Kenya.

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