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Determinants for Community Participation in Decision-making in Local Government Authorities (LGAs): Experience from Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract

Community participation in decision-making is among the universal human rights recognised from the global to the local level as stipulated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) of 1948, Articles 1 and 2; and in the United Republic of Tanzania's constitution of 1977, Article 18. Tanzania has been enhancing community participation in decision-making at the local level through the decentralisation process and local government reforms. The study, therefore, assessed the determinants for community participation in decision-making in LGAs. A sample of 105 participants was used. Data were collected using interviews, observations, focus group discussions and documentary review methods. Data were analysed through descriptive and Binary logistic regression models. The findings from the study found that more than 90% of community members are accessing invitations for decision-making meetings, whereby about 66% of all community members participate in the decision-making process. The variables included in the binary logistic regression model were predictors of participation in decision-making process by 62% in which education level, occupation, access to information on participation in the decision-making meeting, believing that feedback for public inputs is provided by LGAs and a sense of ownership of the plans were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The study recommends that policymakers and lower local government officials should come up with proper approaches to attract more community members in decision-making, especially women and youth. There should also be efforts among LGAs and other development partners in providing civic education for enhancing community understanding of the importance and the process of decision-making at LGAs.

Key words: Community participation, Decision-making, Local government authorities, planning

1. Introduction

The best approach to addressing community needs and problems lies in the community members themselves (Nabatchi & Leighninger, gathering the majority of the members is large (Kalkbrenner & Roosen, 2016). Haldane *et al.* (2019) full participation of community members in the development process yields benefits in the development process for the community. Community participation in decision-making is among the universal human rights (Maisley, 2017). According to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) of 1948, Article 1, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Article 2 of UNDHR recognises that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms. Similarly, in promoting community participation in decision-making in the country, the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, Article 18 obligates the right to freedom of expression where every person has a freedom of opinion and expression of his ideas; has the right to seek,

2015). Community participation can be an important means for developmental changes at the lower local level authorities like villages and *mtaa*, as the possibility of receive and/ or disseminate information regardless of national boundaries; has a right to be informed at all times of various important events of life and activities of the people and also of issues of importance to the society. Besides, in widening community participation in planning at a lower level, the governments also established the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) under articles 145 and 146 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977. Urban councils that include city, municipal and town councils are established under the Local Government (Urban Councils) Act No. 8 of 1982, while district councils that include district councils and township authorities are established by the Local Government (District Authorities) Act No. 7 of 1982.

The purpose of having local government authorities is to enhance the accessibility of services near people. LGAs shall have the right and power to participate and to involve the people in the planning and implementation of development programmes within their respective areas and generally throughout the country. To perform the functions of local government within its area, to ensure the enforcement of law and public safety of the people, to consolidate democracy within its area and to apply it to accelerate the development of the people. The LGAs are administratively led by the full council, which is the gathering of councilors elected from the wards as representatives and also the special seat councilors representing their political parties, while at the village level, the village councils are the decision-making body at the village. The adoption of the local government reform agenda through the Decentralization by Devolution (D-by-D) policy followed by the implementation of the first and second phases of Local Government Reform (LGRP 1) starting in January 2000 through August 2008 and (LGRP 2) between 2009 and 2014 also was among of government effort giving more powers, functions and resources to the people in the communities to participate fully in the development process.

The National Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP III) 2021/22 - 2025/26 supports further decentralisation of the government system in order to respond to local needs in a timely manner. Local government must increasingly be empowered to make planning decisions. Clear provisions are made in FYDP III to guarantee the participation of all citizens in making key choices on matters affecting their lives, focusing also on gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Similarly, the CCM party election manifesto 2020 - 2025, Article 128 (b) and Article 21 (d) provide directives on enhancing community participation at the lower level in the development process for promoting local economic development. However, in spite of all the international and national interventions in promoting community participation in the development process in LGAs, scholars affirm that the importance of community participation in decision making has been widely accepted in several developing countries, including Tanzania; however, there are a number of problems associated with its

implementation (URT, 2020; Mollel & Tollenaar, 2013; Nkunya, 1987).

The need for supporting communities to develop their own social and economic solutions, including exploring new ideas for improving disadvantaged groups and minorities, can't be underestimated. Mubita *et al.* (2017) participation in decision-making may enhance an individual's sense of empowerment, and those empowered individuals are likely to be active in community organisations and community activities. Community participation is enhanced as the process whereby power is developed, promoted, gained, shared, facilitated, or adjusted by the individual or group members in their social interaction, through which they are able to exercise their capabilities to make, affect and bring about changes in the community, as the product of being empowered (Foster, 2018). The central theme of enhancing community participation in decision-making and the whole planning process results in individuals or groups being able to exercise their ability and capacity to understand and interpret the problems faced and later define the needs and to translate these into an action process by participating in organizing themselves to decide, influence, demand, negotiate and engage in carrying out activities (Haldane *et al.*, 2019). Since community participation in the plan or project's preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is indispensable for plan or project sustainability, it is evident that community members complain of limited involvement in decision-making regarding their development plans and projects (Mwankupili & Msilu, 2020). Besides, at the same time, Local Government Authorities (LGAs) complain that even when invited, community members do not show up in important meetings that discuss their development plans and projects (Kessy, 2010; Mdee & Mushi, 2021; Rugeiyamu *et al.*, 2021).

In making community participation in decision making more meaningful, the government has introduced the contemporary improved O&OD methodology that is designed to promote community initiatives as well as to accelerate the achievement of national goals in the Tanzanian Development Vision 2025. The improved O&OD method aims at building and sustaining collaborative relationships between LGAs and communities for better local

development and local service delivery by encouraging and promoting community initiatives. Basically, community priorities are as strong as community initiatives; people might feel the necessity or urgency, but some communities do not have enough ownership, willingness and organisational capacity to collect available resources or organise some collective actions on their own. It includes a strong sense of commitment by the community people to embark on collective actions for problem solving through their initiatives and efforts. The improved O&OD was introduced in 2019 under a pilot phase in five regions of Morogoro, Tanga, Kilimanjaro, Pwani and Singida for the aim of enhancing community participation in decision making under the decentralised system. Therefore, the study assessed the determinants for community participation in decision making taking Morogoro municipality as a case.

2.0. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Morogoro municipality. The council is found in the Morogoro region, which is one of the five regions (Morogoro, Tanga, Kilimanjaro, Pwani and Singida) that were under the pilot phase of executing improved O & OD in Tanzania for enhancing more community participation in decision making under the decentralised system. The study adopted a cross-sectional design using both qualitative and quantitative (mixed) methods. The design was adopted because it allows the collection of data from different respondents at one point in time (Bryman, 2012). Data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through interviews and focus group discussion methods. Secondary data were collected through the documentary review method.

A multi stage sampling was used to select the region, the council and finally the wards of Kilakala and Kichangani, with simple random sampling being used at each stage. The study population were all households in Morogoro municipality that included a total of 133,809 households (URT, 2022), whereby a total of 100 heads of households and 5 key informants were involved in the study. Simple random selection was used to obtain 50 households from each ward, whereby purposive sampling was used to pick the key informants. Procedurally, the Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size. The formula states;

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

where: n = Sample size estimate, N = Size of study population or sampling frame and e = Error of the sample size estimate.

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

$$133,809 / [1+ 133,809 (0.1)^2]$$

$$133,809 / [1+ 133,809 (0.01)^2]$$

$$133,809 / [1+ 1338.09]$$

$$133,809 / 1,339.09$$

$$99.9 = 100$$

The data collected using the questionnaire were edited to detect errors and omissions before being classified and coded to enable them to be analysed using IBM-SPSS Statistics version 25. The qualitative data were analysed through content analysis. The themes and narration of interviews and observational field notes were analysed by identifying the main themes, assigning codes to the main themes, classifying responses under the main themes, and integrating articles and responses into the text.

Quantitative data were analysed through descriptive analysis and multivariate analysis using a Binary logistic regression model. With the consideration of the weighted mean score, descriptive analysis through the Likert scale was conducted to determine community members' attitudes toward LGAs and the decision-making process among them. Multivariate analysis using a Binary logistic regression model was employed to assess determinants for community participation in the decision-making process at LGAs.

Binary logistic regression model specification

The binary logistic regression model was used to analyse the independent variables' explanations of the dependent variable (Participation in decision-making). The model was chosen due to the nature of the dependent variable, which had to categorise respondents into two categories (Participants and non-participants) in the decision making process for one year before the data collection process. Analytically, the model is in the following form:

$$Y_i = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 \dots\dots\dots B_nX_n + e$$

Where:

Y_i = Binary dependent variable that takes the value of "1" for participation "0" otherwise (non-participation)

B_0 = Constant term or intercept

$B_1 - B_n$ = Coefficient of the respective explanatory or predictor variables

$X_1 - X_n$ = Predictor variables included in the model

e = Random error/disturbance/residual term

Table 1: Description of variables involved Binary logistic regression model specification

Variable	Description
Dependent variable Categorical members' engagement status in decision-making	If head of household engaged (1 =Yes, 0=No)
Independent Variables:	
Gender (X_1)	Respondent's gender (1=Male; 0= Female)
Age (X_2)	Age of respondent (Years)
Education (X_3)	Highest education level of respondent (1=Secondary Education; 0= Lower to secondary education)
Occupation (X_4)	Occupation of respondent (1 =Public employee; 0 =Otherwise)
Access to information for decision-making (X_5)	Status of information access for decision-making (1=Accessed; 0 =Not accessed)
Awareness of participation rights (X_6)	Respondent's awareness of the right to participate in decision-making (1 Aware; 0= Not aware)
Awareness creation by LGA (X_7)	Extent LGA has created awareness on engagement in decision-making (1=Favourable; 0= Not Favourable)
LGA reporting back the public inputs (X_8)	Public inputs are reported back by LGAs (1=Yes; 0=No)
Plan ownership (X_9)	Respondent's sense of ownership of the plan (1=Favourable; 0= Not Favourable)

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents involved in the study provide the actual picture of the composition of respondents who were involved in the study. Results for the summary of socio-demographic characteristics for respondents involved in the study are presented in Table 2, whereby, of all respondents involved in the study, 55% were

male and the other 45% were female. The community members aged between 34 and 49 years were large (38%), whereas few respondents (15%) were elders aged 66 years and above. On the other side, the majority of respondents (71%) were married, whereas a few (2%) were separated. More than half of the respondents (53%) were heads of households, and a few (4%) were other family members related to the head of household.

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents involved in the study

Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex of Respondents		
Male	55	55
Female	45	45
Sub Total	100	100
Age of Respondents		
18-33	19	19
34-49	38	38
50-65	28	28
66 and above	15	15
Sub Total	100	100
Marital status	100	100
Single (Never married)	15	15
Married	71	71
Widow/widower	12	12
Separated	2	2
Sub Total	100	100
Relationship with the head of household		
Head of household	53	53
Spouse	8	8
Parent	28	28
Child	7	7
Others	4	4
Sub Total	100	100
Occupation		
Civil servant	22	22
Non formal employment	20	20
Business	37	37
Peasant	18	18
Private institution	3	3
Sub Total	100	100
Participates in decision making		
Yes	62	62
No	38	38
Access to information for decision making		
Yes	90	90
No	10	10
Sub Total	100	100

Table 2 shows that (37%) of respondents were business people, while a few (3%) were employed by private institutions. Nearly half of the respondents (44%) have primary education, while a quarter of the respondents (25%) got a college education, being at various levels from certificate to doctoral level. The study also found that about 90% of respondents get information for decision-making meetings when provided by the lower local government where they live; however, two two-thirds of the respondents (66%) do participate in decision-making at their local government initiatives when needed.

3.2 Ways used by LGA to get communities to participate in the decision-making process

Community participation in the decision-making process is a cornerstone for building a

decentralised democratic society. The participation of citizens in decision-making processes is a key element of local democracy; it increases transparency and makes local government officials more accountable for their actions. However, the magnitude of participation is associated with the effective communication techniques that LGAs use to inform the communities about the need for their involvement. There are various ways used by LGAs to deliver information for participation in decision-making to the community members. The announcement from LGAs, public meetings held by LGAs before the decision-making process, the use of extension officers, LGA billboards, LGA posters and the use of social media were among the ways LGAs are used with varied frequencies (Table 3).

Table 3: Ways used by LGA to get communities to participate in the decision-making process

Invitation techniques	Frequency	Percent of cases
Announcement from LGA	63	63.0%
Public meeting held by LGA prior to decision-making	22	22.0%
Use of extension officers	28	28.0%
LGA billboards	4	4.0%
LGA posters	18	18.0%
Social media	8	8.0%
Total	143	143%

Results are based on multiple response analysis

Table 3 shows that the use of announcements from the LGA to invite the community to participate in the decision-making process reaches the majority (63%) of community members, followed by the use of extension officers, while the technique that reaches few community members is the LGA billboards. Announcements made using speakers on *mitaa* during the evening, when most community members are at home, are commonly used in many areas and successfully reach the majority of the community members. In a similar vein, Bigdeli *et al.* (2013) and Gawronski *et al.* (2021) documented that the community tends to rely on reliable sources to receive information for taking actions provided by their local authorities.

3.3 Community attitudes toward the decision-making process for development initiatives

Understanding the attitudes of the community toward decision-making from the concept/idea, stage of planning, and implementation to monitoring and evaluation is of high importance for ensuring proper approaches to communities' engagement in the decision-making process. Jiwa *et al.* (2013) noted that attitudes and perceptions of key stakeholders on development initiatives in their area can influence ways through which plans can be effectively undertaken. The study sought to determine community attitudes toward decision-making for plan/project preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation in the study area.

Table 4: Community attitudes toward decision-making for development initiatives

Statement	SD	D	N/U	A	SA	Weighted score
The public is aware of the decision-making process.	1 (1%)	40 (40%)	18 (18%)	28 (28%)	7 (7%)	3
Ward and mtaa offices have enough decision-making organisational capacity.	2 (2%)	12 (12%)	11 (11%)	63 (63%)	12 (12%)	4
Communities are aware of the decision-making process.	8 (8%)	41 (41%)	15 (15%)	33 (33%)	3 (3%)	3
Communities are willing to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.	2 (2%)	11 (11%)	18 (18%)	47 (47%)	22 (22%)	4
Local community have a sense of ownership.	2 (2%)	19 (19%)	17 (17%)	52 (52%)	11 (11%)	3
Local community do provide opinions.	1 (1%)	14 (14%)	17 (17%)	55 (55%)	13 (13%)	4
Local communities do devote their labour force toward development initiatives	4 (4%)	7 (7%)	20 (20%)	50 (50%)	19 (19%)	4
Local communities have the behaviour of contributing financial resources	1 (1%)	8 (8%)	12 (12%)	53 (53%)	26 (26%)	4
Local communities have the behaviour of devoting time to plans	3 (3%)	10 (10%)	14 (14%)	48 (48%)	25 (25%)	4
Mean Score						3.66

Table 4 indicates that community members have favourable attitudes (Weighted mean score 3.66) regarding the public awareness of the right to participate in decision-making. This finding suggests that the level of extent of awareness and unawareness among the public of their right to participate is perceived to be equal. It is argued that communities' awareness of their right to participate influences their level of participation in the decision-making process. Fredrick & Ahmad (2023) insist that through awareness, members of the public can fully realise their potential and the ability to access, process and use existing information in the process of participation.

Moreover, results from the study, as indicated in Table 4, show that community members were agreeable (Weighted mean score 4) on the organisational capacity of the lower local governments (ward and mtaa offices) on facilitation of the decision-making process for development initiatives. The results imply that the local government offices are highly trusted in conducting decision-making meetings and other forums, which allows community members to engage in decision-making. This implies that higher trust and confidence in the lower local government offices in their capacity and ability are of high value in the development agenda. Mohamed *et al.* (2018) suggest that if lower government offices are capable of ensuring participatory processes, democracy, transparency and accountability in leadership, it ensures community participation in different stages of development initiatives within their areas.

On the awareness of the community in decision-making at lower government levels, the results show that the community has an undecided attitude (Weighted score 3). This implies that there is an average level of community awareness of what is done, its importance and the consequences for participating in and not participating in decision-making (Table 4). Community participation and engagement in development activities, including decision-making in their areas, may be determined by their awareness of related matters. Tesha *et al.* (2013) observed a positive correlation between awareness, especially civic education and community participation.

Concerning communities' willingness to participate in decision-making for planning,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation, results from the study indicated that more than two-thirds (69% with the aspect of agree and strongly agree) of respondents had a favourable attitude that communities are willing to participate in decision-making for plan, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, with few respondents who strongly disagreed (2%) with the statement. The agreeability (Weighted score 4) of respondents suggests that the community members are cooperative and show their concern over what and how development initiatives should be managed in their areas (Table 4). Being willing is one aspect of participation, as participation may be affected by other factors. Kroneman *et al.* (2019) found that half of the participants in their study were ready to give their opinion on development activities which affect their lives.

On whether the local community has a sense of ownership for the decision-making process within their areas, results from the study, as indicated in Table 4, show that more than half of respondents (52%) agreed that local community has a sense of ownership for decision-making process within their areas, with few (2%) who strongly disagreed with the statement. The weighted mean score results indicated neutral (Weighted mean score 3) perception, which implies that the community has a moderate sense of ownership of the decision-making process for initiatives in which they are engaging. Generally, the ownership of the process influences the outcomes of the decision-making process. Lachapelle (2008) reports that the community's sense of ownership of a particular development aspect within their area determines their participation through decision-making and resources.

On the methods the community use in enhancing participation, results from the study, as indicated in Table 5, show that the community is agreeable (weighted mean score 4) to various participation methods, including demonstrating opinions, devoting labour force, financial contribution and devoting time toward plans, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, Charnley & Engelbert (2005) and Percy-Smith (2006) found that community members who were most free to participate in projects from the identification stage are likely to be comfortable and satisfied supporting the initiative through their labour and money.

3.4 Determinants for community participation in decision-making at local government

This study sought to examine the determinants of community members' participation in the decision-making process for development plans and projects. Covering the objective aimed at providing knowledge on the social factors which motivate individuals' participation in the decision-making process, hence developing robust recommendations to the local government officials and practitioners on the possible ways to increase community members' participation in the decision-making process for development initiatives. Pagatpatan & Ward (2018) noted that evidence provided through study findings in

participation drivers can be useful to development practitioners and mobilisers to correctly and actively involve the public when drafting development projects and plans.

The findings from the study presented in Table 6, for model summary and variables in the equation, indicate that variables included in the model were good predictors for community members' participation in decision-making (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.62$). This implies that 62% of variations in the probability of participation in the decision-making process by a head of household in the community were due to variations in the variables included in the model while the remaining 38% were due to other factors not included in the model.

Table 6: Determinants for community participation in decision-making at Local governments

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Sex	.564	.736	.587	1	.444	1.758	.415	7.446
Age	-1.301	.869	2.240	1	.134	.272	.050	1.496
Education level	3.947	1.115	12.530	1	.000	51.782	5.822	460.579
Occupation	-1.744	.887	3.864	1	.049	.175	.031	.995
Information access for participation in decision	-2.122	1.066	3.962	1	.047	.120	.015	.968
Awareness on the right to participate in decision making	.296	.930	.101	1	.750	1.345	.217	8.327
Extent LGA has created awareness on decision-making	2.791	1.548	3.251	1	.071	16.295	.784	338.492
LGA reported back public inputs	2.638	.952	7.678	1	.006	13.990	2.164	90.422
Community sense of ownership of the plan	-4.512	1.363	10.966	1	.001	.011	.001	.159
Constant	.885	1.255	.497	1	.481	2.423		

Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.62$

The education level of respondents

The education level of respondents provides notable dynamism for one's involvement in the decision-making process within a given community. Aschalew & Teferee (2016) noted that education level plays an important role in individual behaviour and attitude, as people with education have a favourable attitude toward development and tend to be aware of their community development, and it correlates with participation in projects. In this study, Table 6 shows that the education level of a community member had a significant relationship ($P < 0.05$) with participation in decision-making in the local area (OR = 51.78, 95% C.I. 5.82 – 460.58). The findings propose that the higher the education level of a community member, the more the frequency of participation in decision-making increases by

52% relative to a member with a lower education level.

Occupation of respondents

Table 6 indicates that respondents' occupations had a significant influence on participation in decision-making for local government plans ($P < 0.05$). Furthermore, the results show that there is a negative relationship between the occupation of respondents and participation in decision-making. The implication for the results is that non-public employees had a low likelihood of participation in decision-making by 82% (OR = 0.18, 95% C.I. 0.03 – 0.99) compared to public employees. Experiences show that most of the lower local government meetings are conducted on weekends to allow most of the people who are busy on weekdays to attend the meetings. For that matter, non-public

employees have little or no time to rest in a week, including the weekends; hence, it affects their participation in decision-making meetings compared to public employees, most of whom have to rest on weekends. One *mtaa* chairperson added that.

"Our meetings are mostly conducted on weekends to allow most of the people, especially those who are public servants, to participate without any restriction; however, some use the same days to visit their relatives or friends, to perform cleanliness or to attend prayers."

The results correlate with Angba *et al.* (2009) that occupation has some influence on respondents' attitude and time towards participating in community development projects; however, their findings are opposed to the current findings on whether a particular occupation can influence people's attitude and flexibility towards participating in community development projects.

Access to information for the time of participation in decision-making

Table 6 indicates that accessing information about the time for a decision-making meeting has a significant correlation ($P < 0.05$) with participation in decision-making in the *mtaa* among residents in lower local government authorities. The study findings further reveal that there is a negative relationship between accessing information and participation in decision-making, as there is a lower likelihood of participating in decision-making by respondents who did not access information for participation by 88% (OR = 0.12, 95% C.I 0.02 – 0.97) relative to their counterparts who received information about the meeting. Mbithi *et al.* (2019) infer that there is strong evidence of an association between meaningful public participation and access to information on local government budgets, legislations and project plans.

LGA Feedback on Public inputs

Having a favourable attitude towards feedback on public inputs by LGAs had a significant relationship with respondents' participation in decision-making at LGAs ($P < 0.05$). Table 6 shows the positive relationship that exists between believing that public inputs are reported back by LGAs with participation in decision-making, which implies that the likelihood of participating in decision-making for community members who believed that public inputs are reported back is 14% more

(OR = 13.99, 95% C.I 2.16 – 90.42) in comparison to members who perceived that their participation is not valued. Similar to Pennington & Corcoran (2018), whose findings indicated that feedback on decision-making has positive outcomes for individuals and communities only when participants are being properly given feedback about their participation.

Sense of ownership of the plan

Results in Table 6 indicate that respondents who have a favourable attitude towards the sense of ownership of the plan had a significant relationship with participation in decision-making ($P < 0.05$). The findings reveal that there is a negative relationship between having a favourable attitude towards ownership of the plans and participation in decision-making (OR = 0.01, 95% C.I 0.00 – 0.16) which implies that respondents with an unfavourable attitude towards the sense of ownership of the plan had a low likelihood of participating in decision-making by 99% compared to respondents with a favourable attitude. Chirenje *et al.* (2013) insisted that a low sense of ownership about plans in communities limits the participation of members in decision-making that leads to the formulation of development initiatives. On insisting on this, Yilema (2019) noted that to realise sustained and continuous development, the need to create a feeling of local belongingness in the activities of the local community is of high importance because it ensures the contribution and commitment of the public toward the successful implementation of local activities and initiatives.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Generally, the study concludes that there are diverse techniques used by the LGA to inform the community about participation in decision-making meetings in the study area. The magnitude of participation is associated with the effectiveness of the communication techniques that LGAs use to inform community on the need for their involvement. There are various techniques used by LGAs to deliver information for participation in decision-making to the community members. The identified techniques were announcements done by the LGAs, public meetings held by the LGA, use of extension officers, LGA billboards, LGA posters and the use of social media were among the techniques LGAs use with varying frequencies. More importantly, the community

agrees that the *mtaa* have enough decision-making organisational capacity; communities are willing to participate in the decision-making process for development projects through the provision of opinions, devoting a labour force, behavior of contributing financial resources and devoting their time toward plans.

The study recommends that policymakers and lower government officials should come up with proper approaches, including the use of modern ways to inform the community regarding the decision-making process and attract more community members to decision-making, especially women and youth within their administrative areas. LGAs should emphasise accountability and increase trustworthiness to the community members through transparency, efficiency and effectiveness by involving the community in all projects and planning life cycles and reporting back the public inputs. Additionally, policymakers should consider how local governments, including Morogoro municipality, can effectively and successfully provide civic education that relates to decision-making, participation, knowledge and rights.

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