

Perceived Determinants of Economic Success among Rural-based Youth in Wakiso District, Uganda: A Case Study of Namayumba Sub-County

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in 2017 in sub-county (Namayumba) of Wakiso District in central Uganda to assess the determinants of economic success amongst the rural youth who were perceived by community members to be economically successful. The study adopted a descriptive study design using quantifiable data to statistically analyze a population sample. Data was collected using a questionnaire that was administered on 114 youth from the estimated 160 economically successful youth who lived in the sub-county. The response rate was 100%. Female respondents accounted for 57% and males 43%. Respondents aged 25-30 years accounted for 47.4%, 18-24 years (28.9%), and 31-35 years (23.7%). 85.1% were body abled and 14.9% had disability. Underpinned by the theory of sustainable rural livelihood approach, the findings categorically revealed the major perceived determinants of economic success of the rural youth. Major human capital determinants: attaining secondary education (36.8%), ability to read, write and count (21.4%), and self-determination (18.9%). Major financial determinants: making personal savings (50%), membership in groups (32.7%), keeping money at home (45.6%), and re-investing the savings in business (23.2%). Major physical capital determinant: access to transport facilities (20.6%). Major social capital determinant: working in groups (43.9%). Major natural capital determinant: access to land (32.8%). Other determinants: having control over own money/income (98.2%) and being in good relationship with most family members and people at the workplace (100%). The study recommends to development actors and policy makers to adopt the major determinants of rural-youth economic prosperity.

Keywords: *Rural Youth, Youth Livelihood, Livelihood Resources*

INTRODUCTION

Youth economic prosperity has been on the international development agenda since the 1980s. In 1985, the United Nations (UN) passed the 12th August as International Youth Day (United Nations, 2013). Globally, the youth age ranges from 15 to 24 although in different countries, it goes up to 29 years (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2008 and 2012). According to the International Youth Foundation (IYF) (2012) and UN (2012) the world's youth population is close to 1.2 billion. Nearly half of the world's youth population resides in rural areas (Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), 2011 and UN, 2005). Globally, almost 74 million youth are unemployed and just a few have managed to attain economic success (ILO, 2008). To date, there is a clear difference between the characteristics of rural-based youth and urban-based youth (UN, 2013). Each one of the world's youth, wherever they are, has the potential to lead a productive life (Girl Action Foundation, 2012). Empowering the youth, therefore, is important for the realisation of all the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sustainable growth and development for individual countries.

In Africa, countries define 'youth' differently. In Uganda, the youth age ranges from 18 to 30 (Bennell, 2007) whereas in Nigeria, the youth age is between 18 and 35 years (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010). FAO (2017) asserts that nearly 70% of the world's youth population lives in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). The overall youth unemployment rate in Africa is 12.5% (IYF, 2012). Over 54% of the rural youth in Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria survive on less than \$1.25 a day, an indicator of poverty provided in Sustainable Development Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere). To date, 2.2 million youth in SSA enter the labour market every year, but entering a labor market in which 70% of the job growth has been in vulnerable employment, or unpaid work for family or self-employment in the informal sector (IYF, 2012). While the UN (2010) anticipates the number of youth in SSA to grow by more than 19 million from 2010 to 2015, the difference between the economically successful and unsuccessful rural youth is also to expand, and understanding these differences is critical to realisation of sustainable youth development (Namatove, Dawa, Mulira, Katongole and Nyongesa, 2012).

Uganda has the youngest population in the world next to Niger and this population is about 11 million youth (World Bank, 2012). Despite the increasing economic recovery and development interventions targeting the youth, there is still a wide economic gap among the rural youth in rural areas of Uganda (ActionAid International Uganda (AAIU), Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNF), and Development Research and Training (DRT), 2013). At community level, the youth in Uganda are notably a major target of development interventions, but there is still no reliable information on how the rural youth and their counterparts in the urban areas differ in terms of economic prosperity (Namatovu et al., 2012 and Beatrice and Madsen, 2010).

As a result of the social-economic interventions targeting the youth, there has been economic success among the youth at global, continental, national, and community levels (World Bank, 2009). However, the levels of economic success among the rural youth differ greatly (Beatrice and Madson, 2010; Davis et al 2007; Van 2010; and Donahue, James, Wilson and Starker, 2006). In relation to the above background, the Sustainable Livelihood Approach has been in vogue among development practitioners and researchers since the late 1990s and indeed was a central concept of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development's (DFID) strategy (Morse and McNamara, 2013).

According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2006) and DFID (1999), the Sustainable Rural Livelihood Framework highlights key livelihood capital resources upon which sustainable livelihoods can be developed. The framework emphasizes that social capital, human capital, financial capital, physical capital, and natural capital are key livelihood resources for the population. The framework indicates that secure and sustainable livelihoods for all the people (poor and non-poor) and the achievement of livelihood goals (which include but not limited to improved income earning opportunities) depend on the following: i) addressing people's vulnerability by increasing their capacity to withstand shocks and increases resilience; ii) developing livelihood resources; iii) setting support institutional processes and organisational structures, including policies; and iv) undertaking livelihood activities. The sustainable livelihood approach forms the basis for understanding the characteristics of successful youth in general (USAID, 2006).

The youth unemployment rate in Africa is 12.5 % and 2.2 million youth in Sub Saharan Africa enter a labour market every year. However, 70 % of the youth growth has been in vulnerable employment, unpaid work for family or self-employment in the informal sector. In Uganda, The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) (2012) reports a reduction in rural poverty. Over 50 % of the people whose livelihood has reportedly improved are youth. However, despite the ongoing efforts of the Government of Uganda and other development stakeholders to alleviate youth poverty, the majority of the rural-based youth population in Uganda (considering those who are capable to work) still survive on less than 1.25 USD a day. Moreover, there are not enough jobs in the informal sector to absorb the growing number of youth. From 1986, the Government of Uganda (GoU) together with other stakeholders in development and humanitarian aid, has developed and implemented rural poverty reduction strategies and programmes including the introduction of the Decentralisation of Governance (1986), Poverty Eradication Action Plan (1997), Poverty Action Fund (1998/1999), Universal Primary Education (1997), Rural Electrification (2000), National Agricultural Advisory Services (2001), Prosperity For All, Rural Financial Services Strategy (2005), and Plan For Modernisation of Agriculture (2011). In addition, programmes such as the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (2003) and Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan (2001) have been executed by the government.

Numerous rural youth focused social-economic programmes have been implemented in all districts of Uganda by international partners such as bilateral bodies like Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA); multilateral bodies like the United Nations; and international NGOs like Save the Children; as well as local civil society organisations. As a result, some rural youth have improved economically, but the majority have not. An understanding of the characteristics of successful youth would help to increase the rate of success of the rural development programmes, with impact on the rural youth. This study investigated the characteristics of rural youth who had improved economically.

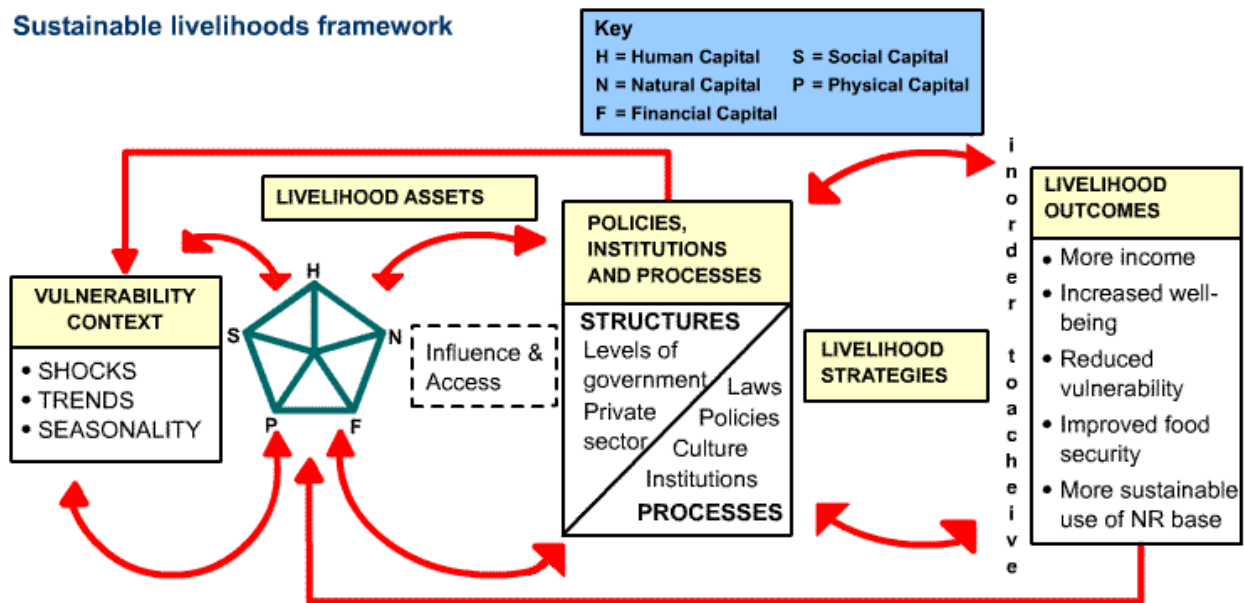
To resolve the issues at hand, the objective of the study was to assess the perceived determinants of economic success among of the rural youth who owned an income generating enterprise in Namayumba subcounty, Wakiso district, Uganda.

METHODOLOGY

This was a cross-sectional research design with a target population of 160 economically successful youth in Namayumba subcounty. Whereas the study used purposive sampling technique to determine the respondents, the sample area of Namayumba sub-county was selected from the 10 sub-counties that form Wakiso district by use of the random sample selection method. To establish the perceived determinants of economic success among the rural-based youth in Wakiso District in Uganda, the study adopted quantitative approach. To determine the targeted population, the researcher made inquiries into this, particularly with the sub-county Chief Administration Officer, the Community Development Officer, and youth leaders. Through these inquiries, it was explained that youth in the sub-county who run or own well established income enterprises were about 160 and these were locally considered to be economically successful, running or owning an income enterprise. Hence, the study population was 160 youth living in Namayumba sub-county. From the study population, a sample size of 114 economically successful rural-based youth was selected through simple random sampling technique based on Krejcie & Morgan’s formular for Determining sample size (Krejcie & Morgan 1970). The necessary quantitative primary data was collected directly from the female and male respondents through a questionnaire survey. Amin (2005) asserts that a questionnaire is an effective data collection tool in social reseach because it helps the reseaaarcher to ollect data from sevral resodents in a short period ot time.

The study was underpined by the sustainable livelihood framework promoted by DFID (1999) with a focus on capital assets including human capital, financial capital, physical capital, social capital, and natural resources. The theory highlights key livelihood capital resources upon which sustainable livelihoods can be developed for all people.

Figure 1:
 The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework



The Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets (DFID, 1999) cited in Scoones (20090)

Ethical Considerations

To fulfil the ethical requirements, the researcher sought an Introductory Letter from the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training through the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (Department of Sociology) of Makerere University. The Introductory Letter was presented to Officials of Wakiso District and Namayumba sub-county administration for permission to conduct the study. The researcher complied with the research principles of informed consent, beneficence, justice and confidentiality. The researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the study as one that is purely academic, and explained to each respondent why he or she was selected. The researcher ensured data protection and safety by securing all the raw data and analysed data in SPSS software in a folder accessible by a password. The researcher treated confidentiality of respondents' responses with high consideration. No responses were used for other purposes other than for academic and learning reasons in line with the study objective.

RESULTS

Human Resource

The respondents' responses pertaining human capital that they perceived to be influencing economic success of the rural youth were collected in relation to one's formal education level, skills endowment, and personal attributes or behaviour.

Table 1:

Human Capital / Resources

| Variables and Indicators | Frequency | Valid % |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Formal Education Level | | |
| Secondary | 42 | 36.8 |
| Primary | 35 | 30.7 |
| Diploma | 22 | 19.3 |
| Bachelor | 8 | 7.0 |
| Uneducated | 7 | 6.1 |
| Skills Endowment (multiple response) | | |
| Reading, writing and counting | 113 | 21.4 |
| Time management skills | 76 | 14.4 |
| Multi-lingo skills | 70 | 13.2 |
| Talking well to people | 68 | 12.9 |
| Finance and record management | 64 | 12.1 |
| Negotiating and bargaining | 61 | 11.5 |
| Planning skills | 52 | 9.8 |
| Leading and managing people | 25 | 4.7 |
| Personal Attributes (multiple response) | | |
| Self determination | 71 | 18.9 |
| Hardworking | 67 | 17.8 |
| Creative | 53 | 14.1 |
| Honest | 39 | 10.4 |
| Other | 37 | 9.8 |
| Risk taking | 34 | 9 |
| Friendly | 29 | 7.7 |
| Decisive | 22 | 5.9 |
| Flexible | 20 | 5.3 |
| Intelligent | 4 | 1.1 |

Source: Primary data from author's field work

From table 1, in the category of education level, the majority (36.8%) of the respondents had attained secondary education level. Regarding skills endowment, the majority (21.4%) of the respondents relied on ability or the skills to read, write and count in the language they understand best. Concerning personal attributes, most (18.9%) of the respondents reported having self-determination in what they were doing. The results revealed that one's formal education level was critical to achieving economic wellbeing. Overall, three major factors of secondary education level; ability to read, write and count; self-determination were perceived by the respondents to have stronger influence on economic success among the rural-based youth than the rest of the human capital resources.

Financial Resource

The respondents' responses pertaining financial resources that they perceived to be influencing economic success of the rural youth were collected in relation to sources of financial start-up capital, sources of loans, methods of saving personal money, and spending behavior.

Table 2:

Financial Capital

| Variables and Indicators (multiple response) | Frequency | Valid % |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Sources of Financial Start-up Capital | | |
| Personal savings | 91 | 50.0 |
| Loans | 47 | 25.8 |
| Friends or relatives | 32 | 17.6 |
| Sale of properties | 12 | 6.6 |
| Sources of Loans | | |
| Groups | 17 | 32.7 |
| Banks | 12 | 23.1 |
| Microfinance institutions | 12 | 23.1 |
| Friends/relatives | 8 | 15.4 |
| NGOs | 2 | 3.8 |
| Government | 1 | 1.9 |
| Methods of Saving Personal Money | | |
| At home | 52 | 45.6 |
| In the bank | 28 | 24.6 |
| Groups | 21 | 18.4 |
| Microfinance institutions | 19 | 16.7 |
| With friends or relatives | 1 | 0.9 |
| Spending Behavior | | |
| Re-investing in business | 86 | 23.2 |
| Medical care | 71 | 19.1 |
| Education | 56 | 15.1 |
| Housing/shelter | 41 | 11.1 |
| Food and water | 36 | 9.7 |
| Clothing | 27 | 7.3 |
| Helping extended family members | 27 | 7.3 |
| Leisure | 17 | 4.6 |
| Transport | 10 | 2.6 |

Source: Primary data from author's field work

Results in table 2 shows that the vast majority (50.0 %) of the respondents got financial start-up capital from own savings. Although there were few respondents who got and used loans to run their business, those who used loans as start-up capital mostly got the loan from social/village groups (32.7 %). There was a unique finding that the majority (45.6 %) of the respondents saved their money at home rather than in groups or formal financial institutions such as banks or microfinance institutions. Moreover, most of the respondents re-invested their savings in business (23.2 %). Overall, the results of the study showed that making personal savings, using loans from groups rather than banks to finance business, saving money (mainly at home), and re-investing in business were perceived by the respondents to have stronger influence on economic success among the rural-based youth than the rest of the financial capital resources.

Physical Capital

The respondents’ responses pertaining physical resources that they perceived to be influencing economic success of the rural youth were collected in relation to access and utilisation of transport facilities, communication facilities, working space, markets, tools and equipment, farm inputs like seeds, electricity, and irrigation infrastructure.

Table 3:

Physical Capital

| Variables (multiple response) | Frequency | Valid % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Transport facilities | 95 | 20.6 |
| Communication facilities | 90 | 19.5 |
| Working space | 71 | 15.4 |
| Market | 66 | 14.3 |
| Tools and equipment | 59 | 12.8 |
| Farm inputs like seeds | 39 | 8.5 |
| Electricity | 36 | 7.8 |
| Irrigation infrastructure | 5 | 1.1 |

Source: Primary data from author’s field work

From table 3, among the physical resources that were available for use, the vast majority (20.6%) of the respondents utilised the available transportation facilities mainly bicycles, motorcycles, as well as passable public feeder and main roads. The respondents perceived access to transportation facilities to have stronger influence on economic success among the rural-based youth than other physical resources such as communication facilities, working space, markets, tools and equipment, farm inputs like seeds, electricity, and irrigation infrastructure.

Social Capital

The respondents’ responses pertaining the social resources that they perceived to be influencing economic success of the rural youth were collected in relation to one’s engagement in social networks or groups and the type of social networks one engaged in.

Table 4:

Social Capital

| Variables and Indicators | Frequency | Valid % |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Do you engage in social networks or groups? | | |
| No | 64 | 56.1 |
| Yes | 50 | 43.9 |
| What social networks are you engaged in? (multiple response) | | |
| Community-based self-help groups | 25 | 50.0 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|----|------|
| Other | 22 | 44.0 |
| Peers (old boy/girls) | 5 | 4.0 |
| Cultural groups | 2 | 2.0 |
| Family SHGs | 0 | 0.0 |
| None of the above | 0 | 0.0 |

Source: Primary data from author's field work

In table 4, although the majority (56.1%) of the respondents were not members of social networks or groups, a relatively large percent (43.9%) engaged in social groups, most of which farmer groups, women groups, youth groups, and cultural groups mainly the 'Nkoba Zambogo Group, a cultural group of the Baganda tribe. The majority (50%) of those who engaged in social networks or groups (37.5% female, 62.5% male) were in informal community-based self-help groups. Regarding age, there were more youth in the age group of 25-30 years who engaged in social groups at 42.2 % than those in the group of 18-24 years at 28.1 % and those in the group of 31-35 at 29.7 %. The youth in the middle aged of 25-30 years were very open to working in groups to attain prosperity. The results showed that the respondents perceived engaging in social networks or groups (mainly community-based self-help groups) to have stronger influence on economic success among the rural-based youth than the rest of the social capital resources

Natural Resources

The respondents' responses pertaining the natural resources that they perceived to be influencing economic success of the rural youth were collected in relation to one's access and utilization of land, rain, wetlands / swamps, forests/trees, minerals, and wild animals.

Table 5:

Natural Resources

| Variables (multiple response) | Frequency | Valid % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Land | 65 | 32.8 |
| Rain | 58 | 29.3 |
| None of the above | 38 | 19.2 |
| Wetlands / swamps | 22 | 11.1 |
| Forests/trees | 13 | 6.6 |
| Minerals | 1 | 0.5 |
| Wild animals | 1 | 0.5 |

Source: primary data from author's field work

As shown in table 5, most (32.8%) of the respondents utilised land for their livelihood and economic success. Although rain was critically used by a relatively large percent (29.3%), the respondents perceived access to land to have stronger influence on economic success of the rural-based youth than other natural resources such as rain, wetlands / swamps, forests/trees, minerals, and wild animals.

Other Determinants

Most (98.2%) of the respondents reported having control over their money/income (deciding how much they saved or spent and how). The economically successful rural-based youth in the age bracket of 25–30 years had more control over their money (47.3%) than their counterparts aged 18–24 years (28.6%) and 31–35 (24.1%). Moreover, the successful rural-based youth with secondary certificate, diploma and bachelor degree (64.2%) had more control over personal income than the respondents who had lower education level (uneducated or primary) at 35.8%.

Regarding gender, more male respondents (57.1%) had full control over own income than the females (42.9%). More males having control over their income than the females could reflect the influence of culture or patriarchal set of the communities where men and boys enjoy more power and opportunities to resources than the women and girls. All the respondents (100%) were in good relationship with most of the people in their home (family members); 82.5% were in good relationship with most of their relatives excluding those living with; and 92.1% were in good relationship with most of the people at their workplace. The results revealed other determinants of economic success of the rural-based youth; particularly factors relating to one's power to control own income (vis-à-vis gender, age and education level differences) and one's good relationship with most of the people they worked or lived with. These could be areas of interest for exploration through research.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that most of the economically successful youth in Namayumba sub-county had attained secondary education; had the ability to read, write and count; and demonstrated self-determination in whatever they were doing. These findings are in agreement with Mohamed & Dunya (2017). Mohamed & Dunya observed that diversity of skills such as ability to read, write and count as well as self-determination were critical for the rural-based youth to attain economic success. The findings are also in line with Angba et al. (2009) who observed that the economically successful rural youth have specific personal characters which give them an upper hand over their unsuccessful youth; citing the ability to resist challenges and disappointments.

The study revealed that the majority of the economically successful youth in Namayumba sub-county accumulated their financial business start-up capital through personal savings. This finding is in agreement with Ahaibwe et al., (2013) who asserts that accessing saving facilities within the community and re-investing part of one's savings are critical to achieving economic success. In addition, the finding is in line with Maxwell, Mazurana, Wagner, and Slater (2017) who highlight financial capital as a key livelihood capital for the realisation of outcomes such as income. However, the findings did not concur with the assertion by Ahaibwe et al., of youth saving money in formal financial institutions. Instead, the findings revealed that most successful rural youth in Namayumba saved their money in their homes rather than in groups, or formal financial institutions such as banks or microfinance institutions.

The study revealed that the majority of the economically successful youth in Namayumba sub-county depended on the availability of usable transportation facilities, mainly bicycles, motorcycles, and passable public feeder and main roads. In the same line, Ahaibwe et al. (2013), and Namatovu et al. (2012) emphasize that people in rural areas need accessible roads and market facilities to be able to sell their farm produce and non-farm products at better prices. Besides, access to and utilisation of such physical capital assets is emphasized by Maxwell et al. (2017) to be critical assets needed to achieve economic success.

The study revealed that the majority of the economically successful youth in Namayumba sub-county were actively involved in self-group activities and therefore, worked in groups. In agreement, Rashid and Gao (2012) highlighted that positive personal attributes like friendliness were critical to influencing one to work with others to achieve their goals. In addition, Moravčíková, Pechočiaková, and Mravcová (2017) assert that the rural youth at times behave differently from the urban youth, and their behaviors are largely embedded in the way they relate

with society members, their fellow youth, and relatives. In the same line, Gemma, et al. (2013) observe that successful youth interact well in their societies with different people, and try out a number of business alternatives until they focus on businesses they can manage. Moreover, Namatovu et al. (2012) asserts that youth in Uganda have increasingly adapted the collective approach within their own villages where they work together to achieve similar or related livelihood goals and demonstrate control over their money.

Further, the study revealed that the majority of the economically successful youth in Namayumba sub-county mostly utilized natural resources, mainly land, for their economic success. This finding is in line with Mohamed et al (2017) who emphasize the importance of natural resources like land, rainfall, wetlands, minerals, and forests to realization of economic success at livelihood outcomes.

Conclusion (s)

The study revealed key determinants of economic success among rural-based youth. Such determinant mostly related to different elements of livelihood assets linked to financial resources, social assets, human resources, physical resources, and natural resources. Economically successful rural-based youth used such resources in a way that leads them to attaining prosperity within the rural setting. Attaining education at least to primary school level was one of the key educational determinant. Therefore, they knew how to read, write and count in their local language. The higher the education level they attained, the more power they gained in controlling their income. In addition, strong self-determination in doing what they were doing was also a major determinant of rural youth economic success. Economically successful rural-based youths have a strong mentality of saving money and using the money to start income activities. They were not fond of using loans as start-up capital nor were they saving money in formal banks. Rather, they saved their money at home and re-invested it in business. They (mainly the males) had control over their money regarding how to save and spending the money. As far as physical capital, access to transportation was a major determinant of the economic success of rural-based youth especially through the use of such as bicycles and motorcycles, as well as passable public feeder roads and main roads. Membership in various social networks or groups was another key determinant of the economic success of the rural-based youth (mostly the males). They had good relationships with people in their homes, family members and people at their workplace. These youths were fond of working together in groups. Land was a key natural resource determinants for their prosperity in the rural countryside. The economically successful male youth had more power to control own income than the female youth. Similarly, the economically successful youth in the age bracket of 25-30 years had more control over their money than those who were below 25 years or above 31 years. Moreover, the youth with higher education level at secondary certificate, diploma and bachelor degree had more control over their money than the uneducated or those who had primary leaving certificate as their highest education level. The results revealed that the economically successful youth were in good relationship with most of the people they worked or lived with.

Recommendation (s)

The study recommends that policy makers, rural community development planners, and local and international agencies in Uganda (in particular Wakiso district) to adopt and institutionalize the success determinants and good practices that the successful rural-based youth use to gain economic prosperity. Mainstreaming such determinants and good practices in rural policy and programmes, with a focus on youth.

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