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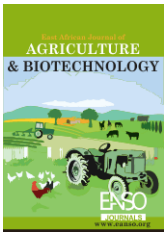

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Original Article

Factors influencing Community Participation in Planning and Implementing Agricultural Development Projects: A Case of the Matongoro Cattle auction project in Kongwa district, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

In Tanzania, different community development projects in various sectors including the agriculture sector have been formulated and implemented following a bottom-up approach. However, in many cases, the impact of such projects has not been significant due to various reasons including poor participation of the targeted population in the process. This study intended to investigate the factors influencing community participation and its levels using the case of the Matongoro cattle auction project. Data were collected from a sample of 150 respondents using respondent questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Descriptive statistics, which generated percentages and frequencies and a binary logistic regression model were used for data analysis. Study findings show that the dominant narrative on the bottom-approach to enhancing participation; nearly 90% of respondents indicated a low level of participation. The critical factors which were found to significantly influence community participation projects at $p>0.05$ were income level, number of cattle owned, age, awareness, experience, and sex. The study recommends that the government should design ways to increase local community participation throughout conceptualisation, formulation, and implementation to ensure the success and sustainability of these agricultural projects.

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INTRODUCTION

Community participation aims at involving people within the community to urge the utmost benefit for the entire society. It is primarily related to the involvement of individuals and communities in making decisions in terms of the aspects that affect their lives (Burns *et al.*, 2004). Aref (2010) argues that community participation in agricultural projects, if not considered from the initial stages such as problem identification, during planning, implementation, and evaluation, development and sustainability will not be attained. This means that the active participation of target communities in project planning and implementation is very important in many ways. First is ensuring value for money of intended projects, and second is enabling self-mobilisation of the community in all stages that bring a sense of ownership to the targeted community, which eventually raises awareness and a need to work hard individually and collectively for the betterment of their community (Watson, 2014). As expounded by Kariuki (2014), this increases the relevance of the project and its sustainability but also increases the possibilities of addressing a real and specific problem faced by the targeted community (Azizu, 2014). Further, according to Muro and Namusonge (2015), active participation of community members facilitates accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, self-reliance spirit, and momentum in implementing the project.

The importance of the Agricultural sector of the financial sector in Tanzania is that it contributes to almost 65% of employment, about 28 % of the country's GDP and about 24% of export earnings, and ensures food security in the country (FYDP3, 2021, p. 16). Realising this importance, the Government of Tanzania established the Agricultural Sector Development Program (ASDP) phase II as a framework for agricultural development for a period of ten years starting from 2017/2018 to 2027/2028, and be implemented into two phases of five years each while the first started from the year 2017/18, (URT, 2017). The main objective of ASDP Il and its two components among four is to transform the agricultural sector (crops, livestock & fisheries) towards higher productivity and commercialisation levels and increase smallholder farmer income for improved livelihood and guarantee food and nutrition security (URT, 2017, p. 3-4). Likewise, Matongoro Cattle Auction Development Project as an agricultural project can play a key role as a driver not only in economic growth but also in poverty reduction in the targeted community since it aims to provide a market to Agro pastoralists and improve their income (livelihood improvement) and foster the community development in general.

In the same way, due to the importance of the agricultural sector and community participation in Tanzania in 2019, improved Opportunities and Obstacles to the Development model were initiated to facilitate the active participation of the target

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audience and to accelerate the Decentralisation by Devolution (D by D) policy which aimed at providing better service to people (URT, 2019). It encourages people to be the main actors in their development, which will lead to the sustainable development of the project and promote community participation in mobilising resources, knowledge, and experience to stimulate initiatives at all levels of society and contribute to the attainment of vision 2025. Furthermore, the Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP) II 2016/17-2021 objectives also aim at strengthening the role of local participants (actors) in the planning and implementation of a development project (URT, 2019). The Social-Economic Profile report produced by the government of Tanzania in 2016 shows that community participation in the Kongwa district was minimal in different developmental project activities most especially in planning and implementation (URT, 2016, p. 40).

In connection with that, the Kongwa district authority has over time, taken a concerted effort to improve the livelihoods of community members through the implementation of community development projects in various sectors including the agricultural sector. For example, between 2013 and 2019, the Kongwa District council implemented three projects in the sector. These include a slaughterhouse project in Mkoka village that was implemented from 2013 to 2014 at a value of Tsh. 40 000 000/-, Irrigation Project in Iduo village implemented from 2017 to 2019 at a value of Tsh. 600 860 000/ and a Maize market project in Mkoka village implemented from 2018 to 2019 with a budget of Tsh.400 000 000/- (Personal communication with WEOs & Extension Officers, 2021). Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence community participation and its levels of community participation in Agricultural development projects.

Despite the effort made by the central government and Kongwa LGA (Local Government Authority) to utilise participatory methods in planning and implementing development projects initiated through its budgetary processes to ensure community development (Malangalila, 2009), the impacts of such initiatives have been very minimal. A good example is the Matongoro Cattle auction project which was constructed in 2014, but today the structure is not used for its intended purpose (Personal communication with Matongoro village chairperson, 2021). Reflecting on the discourse and realities on the ground and reading the objective of the project, it becomes clear that there is a great mismatch. This demonstrates the efforts taken by the Kongwa LGA, and the outcome has not been proportional to the budgetary support in the agricultural development sector.

Cognizant of the above, despite efforts taken at the policy level to increase community involvement in the planning and implementation of community projects, the situation is discouraging in Kongwa. Despite the recognition of the importance of community participation in the planning and implementation of Agricultural development projects, there is still a gap in understanding the factors that influence community participation in these initiatives. Therefore, the research aims to identify and analyse the factors influencing community participation and the levels of community participation in the Matongoro Cattle Auction project. The findings of this research will help the Kongwa district council and the Central Government, and other policymakers to design programs and policies that will ensure active and interactive participation, as this not only improves the knowledge and ability of participants but enriches a realisation of needs where people learn to realise their objective more easily. It is also a means of determining values, priorities and collective actions. This is true as through awareness programs, community members are made aware of and can fully realise their potential and the ability to access, process and use existing information in the process of participation. This is important for stakeholders in selecting and developing specific strategies for

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the optimisation of available resources and opportunities in ensuring the sustainability of agricultural development projects.

THEORIES RELATED TO THE STUDY

Participation Theory

The study is founded on "Participation theory". The eventual effect of participation theory is that people, as part of a social system, try to participate in a certain activity or project with a certain incentive (Jennings, 2000). The theory postulates that proper community participation usually facilitates project ownership and sustainability. According to Jennings (2000), community participation is the full involvement of members of the community and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of development projects to improve the community's life. Thus, participation theory puts more emphasis on the mutual involvement of all-important stakeholders, especially the use of respective members of the community to make decisions and set plans for their future. Yet this theory may not completely capture the social relationships and networks that emphasise community participation. So this theory was used in this study to explain the importance of community participation for the sustainability of agricultural development projects.

Social Capital Theory

The study adopted the "Social capital theory", which emphasises the importance of social relationships and networks in encouraging effective action and community development (Lin 2001). This theory assumes that social networks are an important resource that can be leveraged to support development projects. In the context of this study, the theory might focus on identifying how community networks can be used to support the planning and implementation of Agricultural development projects for farming, marketing and distribution. The strengths of this theory include its emphasis on the importance of social relationships, trust, and cooperation in promoting community development (Ibrahim *et al*., 2017).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explains and summarises the relationship between research objectives and the variables and their indicators. Thus, it is defined as a set of thoughts and beliefs taken from related fields of inquiry and used to structure the following presentation (Reiche & Ramey, 1987). On the other hand, community participation is a process that requires planning and resources, but also, where individuals and groups from the community are recognised and given a chance to express their views and wishes, the outcome is good. In such a situation, collective action is taken to significantly contribute to solutions (Burns *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, the study conceives that community participation in agricultural development projects can be influenced by independent variables such as Education level, Occupation status, Income level, Sex, Number of cattle owned, Household size, Experience, Age, and Level of awareness; opinions, approval of the community, and strategies (techniques) used to involve the community. As well as Government policies were considered the moderate variable.

Aref (2010) also listed a few obstacles to community participation. These obstacles include a lack of information, people's inability to engage, weak and ineffective government institutions, a lack of emphasis on the development of human resources, reliance on the government, and a lack of community power. Therefore, a lack of information and knowledge frequently limits active engagement. Farmers must possess knowledge of decision-making processes to actively participate in agriculture planning (Cole, 2006). It is anticipated that a high level of community participation will contribute to the effective implementation of development projects.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

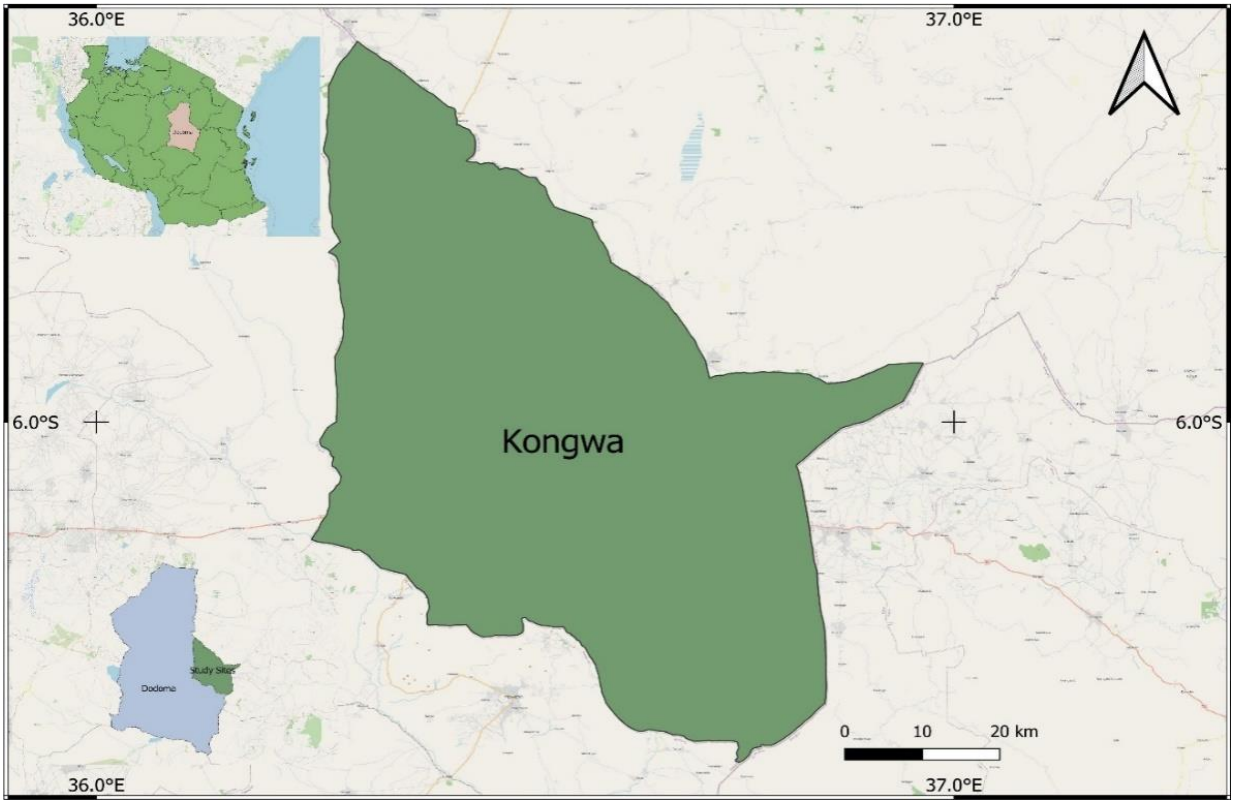
Description of the Study area

Kongwa district council is located between latitude 5° 30' to 6° 00' South and longitudes 36°15' to 36°00' East of Greenwich Meridian (URT, 2016). Kongwa is one of the seven districts of the Dodoma region. The council has been implementing various projects within its 22 wards and projects that were implemented with the participation of the community have been successful; some of them are the Mkoka Slaughter house development project, the Mlali irrigation development project, and the Mkoka maize market development project.

The main economic activities in the council are crop production and livestock keeping (URT, 2016). With a population of 157,016 cattle and 108,521 goats with an average annual increase of 2.9% for cattle and 4% for goats and marketing of livestock is not conducive in the district council. Currently, livestock keepers from the study area travel to the Dosidosi area, which is 42 km in the Manyara region to sell their cattle. To cover that distance, they incur the costs of travelling to the project one day before the cattle auction, and also, they incur the costs of paying the guards to take care of their cattle. Moreover, there is also the cost of getting a permit to transport livestock (cattle) and other legal requirements associated with trans-regional animal transportation. Therefore, they incur considerably high costs.

The study was conducted in the Kongwa district. The district was chosen specifically even though there is a high population of livestock in the study area; marketing has been poor and unprofitable. This has raised the question of whether or not the people are involved in the initiation and running of such projects and, thus a need for the study (URT, 2016).

Figure 1: A map of Kongwa used as a study site



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Research Design

The study used a cross-sectional design whereby data were collected once from a selected sample of respondents (Zangirolami-Raimundo *et al.,* 2018). The cross-sectional design was adopted because it is cost-effective, less time-consuming, and a lot of information is obtained in a relatively short period and allows data to be collected at one point in time from different individuals or groups of respondents (Hemed, 2015).

Study Population

The study involved growing Pastoralists as the targeted population. Key informants were; Extension officers, VEOs, village chairpersons, Heads of institutions such as Schools and hospitals as experts invited members of the WDC, WEO, and Councillor, District extension officer, District economist and District planner. These key informants are partners in agricultural development projects and knowledgeable of the phenomenon under review in the Kongwa district, mainly in the Matongoro ward.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The study employed a cluster sampling technique in obtaining the sample size of respondents, where clusters were formed based on villages, which means each village stands as a cluster. Agro Pastoralists were grouped according to their villages (Matongoro, Norini and Mlanje) as clusters, and then a simple random selection through lottery was used to get 150 respondents. Also, the purposive sampling technique was used to select Agro Pastoralists leaders for FGDs and Extension officers, VEOs, WEO, village chairpersons, Councillor, and heads of technical institutions invited members of the WDC and participants from the district level for KIIs who were involved according to their positions.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967:886) simplified formula for sample size, which is:

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

Where n=sample size, N=Number of Populations (240) and e= margin errors and the confidence level is 95%.

$$n = \frac{240}{1+240\,(0.05)^2} = 150$$

Data Collection Procedure

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently from various sources of data. The Primary data were obtained from the respondents through questionnaires, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII). Key informant interviews were used to collect qualitative information using a checklist. For quantitative data, a questionnaire was used. The questionnaire had both open and closed questions and contained four sections. Section one aimed to collect background and socioeconomic information, section two aimed at collecting data on the factors which influenced community participation were mentioned, and section three included questions on assessing attitudes towards community participation and levels of community participation were done through the use of a questionnaire.

Nineteen Key Informant interviews were done and included the four (4) Extension officers, four (4) Executive Officers (3VEOs & 1WEO), three (3) village chairpersons, four (4) Heads of institutions, Councillor, district extension officers, district economist, and district planner through a checklist. Four (4) Focused Group Discussions were done involving 9 people in each FGD. The FGDs included the -agro-pastoralist leaders from each village (formed by -the agro-pastoralist committee) and at the ward level (-agro-pastoralist ward committee). These Key informants and FGDs respondents have a virtue of knowledge and experience on the phenomenon under reviews of the Matongoro cattle auction project.

A pretest was conducted at the Mkoka house slaughter project, which has more or less similar

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features (characteristics) to the study village, to check the validity and relevance of the questions to the intended respondents to get relevant information. Pretesting is a method of checking that questions work as intended and are understood by those individuals who are likely to respond to them (Hilton, 2017). After pretesting, the instrument was revised based on identified changes.

Data Analysis

Binary Logistic Regression was used to determine the association between the explanatory variables (income level, occupation status, level of education, age, number (No.) of cattle owned, household size, experience, level of awareness and sex, which were used as independent variables) and community participation. These variables helped in measuring community participation in terms of attending meetings, decision-making, volunteering work, use of local resources and following through with commitments. This model was used because the dependent variable was a dummy variable (Participated or Not participated). The Binary Logistic Regression equation is as follows:

$$\text{Ln } (P/1\text{-}P) = \beta_o+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+ \beta_5X_5+E.$$

Where P = probability of participation in the development project, (1-P) represents the probability of non-participation, β_o = Constant, β_{1}-- β_4 = Parameter estimates, and X_1=Income level, X_2=Education level, X_3=Occupation status, X_4=Age, X_5=No. of cattle owned, X_6 =Household size, X_7=Experience, X_8=Levels of awareness and X_9=Sex and E=Error term.

Also, descriptive analysis was used to determine the level of community participation in the Matongoro cattle auction project, where five (5) statements were used. Whereby for every 'Yes' response, the respondent scored 1(one) mark, and for every 'No', the respondent scored one (1). Therefore, the highest score was five (5) if the respondent responded 'Yes' for every stage or phase of the project, and the lowest score was one (1) if the respondent responded 'No' for every phase of the project. The calculation of Index score levels was five (5) scores as the highest, three (3) average scores, and one (1) lowest score, where five (5) statements were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents'

Several respondents' characteristics were taken into consideration during the study. They include; sex, age, marital status, education level, main occupation as well as the home village of the respondents.

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents (n=150)

Respondents' characteristics		Percentage (%)
Villages	Mlanje	33.3
	Norini	33.3
	Matongoro	33.3
Sex	Male	85.3
	Female	14.7
Age (years)	18 – 35	8.2
	36 – 49	38.8
	≥ 50	53
Marital status	Single	2.2
	Married	79.7
	Divorced/separated	4.1
	Widow/Widower	11.3
	Never/ married	2.7

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Respondents' characteristics		Percentage (%)
Education level	No formal education	29.5
	Primary education	62.4
	Secondary education	8.1
	Tertiary education	0
	University education	0
Main occupation	Livestock keeping	82.6
	Crop production	9.3
	Government/Privately employed	3.9
	Others	4.2

Factors that Influence Community Participation in Cattle Auction Development Projects

A binary logistic regression model was used to define the explanatory variables that influence community participation in planning and implementing development projects.

Income level, education level, occupation status, age, household size, number (No.) of cattle owned, awareness, experience, and sex were the variables included in the model. The model summary shows that the independent variables fit well in the regression model (R^2= 0.929). The Cox & Snell R Square and Nagelkerke R Square of 0.792 and 0.929, respectively, reveal the correlation between participation and explanatory variables, which are Income level, education level, occupation, age, household size, number of cattle owned, awareness, experience and sex.

The results (Table 2) show that some explanatory variables such as income level, age, number of cattle owned, awareness, experience and sex significantly influence community participation in planning and implementing cattle auction development projects, while education level, occupation and household size did not have a significant influence at a 5% significant level (α). This is consistent with the research reported by Magagan and Ngugi (2021), which highlights the growing significance of project management techniques as more and more work is structured around projects and programs.

Table 2: Factors influencing community member participation in the cattle auction development project

Variables	B	df	Sig.
Occupation	3.114	3	.331^{+}
Education level	6.336	4	.216^{+}
Income level	.806	1	.001*
Age	.703	2	.000*
No. of cattle owned	1.099	3	.002*
Awareness	.921	1	.001*
Household size	4.234	3	.442^{+}
Experience	.663	2	.000*
Sex	1.089	1	.002*

**=Statistically significant at α = 0.05; + = statistically not significant at α = 0.05*

The results in *Table 2* suggest that the level of income an individual receives has a positive, significant influence on individual participation in cattle auction development projects (0.001<0.05); therefore, the higher the income level, the higher the participation in cattle auction development projects.

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The influence on individual participation increased at a rate of 0.806 for every additional shilling received by the respondents. The findings imply that for persons to participate in a project, they must have capital; it requires a certain amount of capital to own and keep livestock for business purposes (Ongachi *et al.,* 2018). As some of the households in the study area owned a small number of cattle and claimed that they could not start selling until the number of cattle increased. Furthermore, this was revealed in discussion with one of the FGDs; they reported that due to a lack of a profitable market, they transfer and distribute their cattle to relatives or friends outside the district or region to them to get manure and milk, which leads to remains with a small number of cattle.

The results in Table 2 show that number of cattle owned by household significantly influence participation positively (0.002<0.005), which means that agro-pastoralist with a high number of cattle will have an additional participation rate of 1.099 in cattle auction development project more than those having a low number of cattle. This is due to the fact that running a business selling cattle each month requires a greater number of cattle or capital to run the business; as it was revealed in a discussion with one of the FGDs, the respondents reported that due to lack of a profitable market, they transfer and distribute their cattle to relatives or friends outside the district or region to them to get manure and milk, which leads to remains with a small number of cattle.

The results in Table 2 show that age had a positive relationship and significantly influenced community participation (0.000<0.05). The results demonstrate that when a person becomes older, his or her likelihood of taking part in programs to develop cattle auctions likewise increases. This could be because, among most tribes of livestock keepers, like the Maasai, Mang'ati, and Sukuma, the elder is the one who owns a sizable herd of animals, which will be passed down to his offspring after his passing (Steve, 2015). The elders of these livestock keeper tribes teach their children how to care for various livestock such as cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, and so on (Roberts, 1996). As the children grow, the parents will offer their children several livestock as capital (Attanasio *et al*., 2022). As time goes on, the number of livestock will increase, and as the children grow older, their livestock numbers will also increase (Roberts, 1996; Steve, 2015).

The results (Table 2) show that the amount of information (making aware) Agro-pastoralist received has a significant positive influence on participation in cattle auction development projects (0.001<0.005). This means that the community participation level will be 0.921 times more for every additional information about the project. The findings imply that for the agro-pastoralists to increase their participation, they must receive information related to the project. This could be about decision-making (in planning), volunteering raw materials, and even training about the market or access to loans.

Also, the study revealed that although there is awareness about the cattle auction, lack of effective information (transparency) and teamwork between project implementers and the agro-pastoralists throughout the project circle resulted in poor participation during the implementation of the project goals, the respondents claimed that 'we sew project implementer build the contractions and some of the members from our society were hired as labourers. The outcome is related to that of Kwena and Letting (2013), who reported that community involvement in development projects is not only essential to awareness of their roles and tasks but knowledge and skills on how to accomplish the responsibilities so that they are capable of taking part in development projects that will improve their lives.

The results in Table 2 show that experience of a person influences participation in cattle auction development projects positively and significantly (0.000<0.005). The findings indicate that agro-

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pastoralists with a positive experience in agricultural development projects will have an additional rate of 0.663 in cattle auction development projects than those having a negative experience. This could be to the fact that positive experience on a given subject boosts individual participation and establishes commitment and a sense of ownership, while negative experience hinders a person's participation since it tends to resist new ideas, which affects the project's sustainability. The finding is connected to the study by Miruka and Otieno (2016), who found that experiences (negative experiences) like lack of project ownership and incomplete projects lead to low participation in water projects of local beneficiaries.

As indicated in *Table 2*, the results show that sex has a significant influence (0.002<0.05) on community participation in cattle auction development projects positively at a rate of 1.089. The results show that males are the ones who mostly participated in cattle auction development projects more than females. In interviews with village chairpersons and Councillors, they claimed that in the study area, women are not do much voluntarily, and they (women) want to hear messages or information from men. This is due to the fact women are highly concentrated on the house chores such as cooking and taking care of the children, thus leaving men to concentrate highly on different economic activities. In most of the tribes in Tanzania, males are the head of the family and property owners (Arieko and Kisimbii, 2020). Furthermore, the ownership of property in most developing country societies is mostly owned by men rather than women; therefore, ownership of livestock keepers is mainly by men, and this highly influences men in participating in cattle auction projects such as the Matongoro. The results are in line with the study by Njuki and Mburu (2013), who reported that property ownership is mainly based on men in most livestock-keeping societies, thus influencing women not to be able to participate in most cattle auction projects.

> *"Most of the people who are involved in this cattle development project are men; women are very few in most of the auctions. In this area, men are taken as the ones to look for food for a family, whereas women stay at home to take care of the children"* (Key Informant Interview, VEO, May 2022).

Nonetheless, the findings show that the education level of the respondents had a positive beta coefficient, implying that an increase in the level of education has the possibility of increasing respondents' participation in the cattle auction projects. The finding concurs with that of Paltasingh and Goyari (2018), who argued that farmers' level of education influences the adoption of modern technologies, thereby influencing their participation in different development projects. In addition, Urassa (2010) argues that the household head's education is thought to boost the possibility of family members' participation in different community activities. Hence, farmers with greater levels of education are more likely than their counterparts to have an impact on participation in different community projects such as the Matongoro cattle auction projects.

The results presented in Table 2 show that the occupation of the respondents had a positive beta coefficient. That is to say, the occupation of agro-pastoralists influences their participation in cattle auction projects. The observation is in line with the findings by Maniriho *et al.* (2018), who reported that a respondent's occupation had a significant effect on the community members' participation in different community projects. Most of the employed personnel will have low participation in different community projects compared to the unemployed personnel. This is highly influenced by the fact that the employed personnel deal mostly with office work rather than pastoral activities.

> *"Here in the cattle auction project, most of the participants are the agro-pastoralists themselves or people who are involved with*

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agro-pastoralists. This reduces the level of community participation in the area since the auction aim to improve the people/community livelihoods" (Key Informant Interview, Extension Officer, May 2022)

Level of Community Participation in Cattle Auction Development Project

On levels of community participation in the project, the study takes into account the involvement of local communities (information, meeting, involvement and teamwork) in five phases of the project, which are conception and initiation, planning, execution, performance/monitoring, and project close. The result below shows that most of the respondents 100% were just involved in the implementation stage only.

Table 3: Community involvement in different phases of the project (N=150)

Project stages	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Conception and initiation	4	2.67	146	97.33
Planning	6	4	144	96
Implementation	150	100	0	0
Monitoring	12	8	138	92
Project close	6	4	144	96

The study used Index scales to determine the degree of the levels of participation in the projects based on phases whereby for every 'Yes' response, he/she received 1 score and for every 'No' response, he/she received 0 scores. For that reason, the maximum score was five (5) and this occurred if the respondent responded 'Yes' for every phase of the project. Index score levels were constructed as follows based on calculation, five (5) was a maximum score, whereas three (3) was an average score. Thereafter, any score below-average score was regarded as a low level of participation, an average score was regarded as a medium level of participation, and any score above average score was regarded as a high level of participation. The result (*Table 4*) shows most respondents, 90%, fall into the group of low level of participation, 6% of medium level and only 4% for a high level of participation.

Table 4: the level of community participation in agricultural projects (N=150)

Level of participation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low level of participation	135	90
Medium level of participation	9	6
High level of participation	6	4

The engagement of respondents in various phases was calculated based on the project's five key phases, which are initiation, planning, implementation, performance/monitoring, and project closing (Omotesho *et al.*, 2016). The results (Table 3) demonstrate that the majority of the community members participate in the project during the implementation phase. This was further revealed during a discussion with one of the key informant interviews who remarked that they were only being informed by their leaders to go and participate in implementing project activities.

The respondents asserted that;

"They only learn about agricultural projects planned for implementation in their area from

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> *their leaders; they must be ready and cooperate sufficiently during implementation" (*Key Informant Interview with Extension officer & one of the FGD May 2022).

That indicates that they were not involved in the initial stages of initiation and planning. Likewise, during the interview with the Agro pastoralist leaders and village chairpersons, they complained that the project implementer was the sole designer, initiator, and planner, and the community (Agro pastoralists) were just observers. The results are in line with those of Ongachi *et al*. (2018), who claimed that most development projects are organised by knowledgeable individuals or influential leaders and are carried out for the benefit of the local population without seeking their opinions or comments on such projects. The leaders of many local communities lack sufficient confidence in the degree of locals' expertise to offer their thoughts on the start and planning of the project (Okech & Steve, 2016). A high percentage (90%) of low-level individual participation was the only outcome of including a large number of people during the implementation stage, as seen in table 4 after the index scale score. For a medium or high degree of engagement, many people should be active in more than two phases of the project's implementation. By including locals in the project at different stages of its development, project sustainability may be increased. Involving locals in a project at different stages, according to Aref (2011), makes them feel more responsible for it and connected to it, which is essential for its sustainability. Green (1986); Huff and Kline (1999) state that participation in a greater sense, therefore, is the involvement of members of a particular community in the formulation of public policy or its implementation and its usage. That is, it is the participation of local people in the development process as a whole.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study intended to investigate the factors influencing community participation in Agricultural development projects and the levels of their participation. Below are the conclusions drawn from the findings.

On factors influencing community participation in the Matongoro cattle auction development project, the findings show that income level, number of cattle owned, age, awareness, experience and sex significantly influenced the community participation in planning and implementing the cattle auction development project while occupation did not have a significant influence on community participation at a 5% significant level (α).

Referring to levels of community participation in the project, the study concluded that most of the respondents 100% were involved in the implementation stage since they were informed about involving in such a stage, but also, they were interested in the project and only a few people in the initiatives, planning process, and monitoring. That makes most of the respondents 90% fall into the group of low level of participation, 6% of medium level and only 4% for a high level of participation. Generally, the project was done through a participatory style of the bottom-up approach, which not promotes the active participation of local people, project ownership, project sustainability and levels of community participation.

The research study recommends that the government should work to increase local community participation in the initiatives, planning process, and monitoring, and not just only in the implementation stage to ensure the success and sustainability of these agricultural projects. This could be accomplished by enacting laws that will direct project implementers to guarantee that local communities, as the project's primary stakeholders are included from the beginning to the end. When attempting to engage the community in development projects including cattle auctions,

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consideration should be given to variables like income level, age, education, and sex. On the other hand, there should be equal participation of community members in development projects; this will ensure sustainable growth of people's livelihoods due to the ongoing projects. Also, the study suggests the design of the project should be straightforward and adaptable in light of the complicated reality of rural areas. The first step must be a modest one, built on coherent packages of modestly sized capital-intensive enterprises that are sensitive to local circumstances. Packages can be changed, added to, or removed based on experience. Such a step-by-step strategy requires a well-structured monitoring and assessment mechanism.

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