



Role of Functional Group Relations on Social Empowerment of Youth Groups in Kajiado North Sub-County

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Abstract: Most social empowerment youth groups have been unable to achieve significant social empowerment of their youth due to varying intra-group relations, which hinder the achievement of the groups' goals. This study investigated the role of functional group relations on social empowerment of youth groups in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya. The study was guided by the Empowerment Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Youth Dynamics Theory. A descriptive research design integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques was employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how intra-group relations influence youth social empowerment. By combining numerical data with in-depth narratives, the study identified patterns and relationships and explored underlying experiences and perceptions. The study targeted 300 youth groups across three wards in Kajiado North Sub-County, from which 171 groups were selected using Slovin's formula. Purposive and stratified sampling were used to select groups and interview participants. Data was collected through questionnaires and focus group discussions, then analyzed using thematic, descriptive, and inferential methods. The study was motivated by the rising social vices among youth in the Sub-County despite the existence of youth social empowerment groups. Findings revealed that functional intragroup relations, including inclusivity, fairness in leadership, effective communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, and a sense of belonging, significantly enhanced youth participation and social empowerment. Individual traits such as communication, leadership, confidence, and problem-solving skills positively influenced personal development. The study concludes that inclusive group environments enhance youth empowerment and recommends promoting inclusivity, leadership, conflict resolution, skills development, and support for youth groups.

Keywords: Functional group relations, Social empowerment, Youth groups, Youth empowerment

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1. Introduction

On a collective level, the social empowerment of youth is realized when groups help youth gain a sense of belonging,

self-esteem, and self-confidence, enabling them to control their environment and way of life by making the right decisions and living in line with society's norms and

values. Social empowerment can be defined as developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships, institutions, and discourses that exclude people. Empowerment is a process that takes place within an environment and, therefore, in interaction with it. Studies by Arifin et al.(2024) have shown that environments and relational aspects play a significant role in empowerment processes. Similarly, Correa and Neves (2020) stated that empowerment is an active social process that occurs in relation to others and that varies according to the environment and the people involved. For this study, social empowerment was defined as the process of enhancing the sense of belonging and attachment, and fostering appreciation among people to anchor them together.

Belonging to a group, regardless of the group's purpose or composition, is one of the most human experiences (Glasford, 2021). Group functional relations play a vital role in determining whether a group will be able to achieve its objectives and the purpose of its formation (Krajcsák, 2021). A study carried out by Shelley Farrington in 2011 to determine the influence of intra-family relations on the performance of family business indicated that families with stable and healthy relationships among their members succeeded in their business compared to families that had poor intra-group relations. According to Moody and Mucha (2024), a cohesive group tends to be more productive than a non-cohesive group.

In Kenya, according to the Agha Khan University Report 2016, 80% of Kenya's population is below 35 years old. Failure to provide appropriate opportunities for social empowerment for this large segment of the population could have enormous social consequences. The Kenyan Government has taken all possible measures to empower the youth, with recent efforts including the creation of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs (MOYA) to address youth concerns. However, according to Omweri (2024), the lack of social empowerment of youth in Kenya has persisted since independence, despite various policies being formulated and implemented to assist them.

Group functional relations play a significant role in the realization of social empowerment among youth in youth groups. Research done by Mbugwa ET al.(2025), on challenges facing youth projects in Kenya indicates that most youth groups fail to achieve social empowerment because of factors such as differences in personal traits of the members, lack of commitment to group purpose, because the members identify less with the group as well as intra-group conflicts. A report on a survey conducted on the status of youth groups in Marani District revealed that youth groups are faced with many challenges that have hindered them from achieving their objectives (Magangi, 2023). Of the 102 youth groups that had been registered, 28 no longer existed, 16 were dormant, and only 58 were

active (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2021). This is an indication that many youth groups fail to achieve their goals of social empowerment because the groups are not sustainable. This trend could be attributed to the relations among the youth within different empowerment groups and organizations (Kaumbulu and James, 2022).

In Kajiado County, where this study focused, numerous youth groups have been established to empower young people. Kajiado North is full of a youthful population since it is the residence of many surrounding University students. A report by the County Government of Kajiado indicates that 11 youth groups have been formed in Kajiado North Sub-County. Examples of these groups are Heads and Hands (H&H), Mukoa Youth Development group, etc.

These youth groups were formed to educate and socially empower young people facing challenges such as drug abuse, violence, tribal clashes, and radicalization. However, social vices, especially drug abuse, continue to rise among youth despite their participation in empowerment groups. Research shows that these problems affect both poor and economically stable youths, highlighting the need to examine how intra-group relations influence the achievement of social empowerment.

With the above revelations on the failure to socially empower the youth despite the existence of many youth groups aimed at empowering them, the study specifically sought to examine role of functional group relations on social empowerment of youth groups in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya to provide solutions on how these youth groups can be reformed to achieve their purposes of empowering youth socially.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Functional relations form the foundation of any social group. The sustainability of a group and its ability to achieve its objectives depend largely on the quality of interactions and relationships among its members. In earlier years, the lack of youth social empowerment was mainly linked to the absence of organized youth empowerment groups. To address this, several groups, such as Head and Hand and Bus Radio, have been established in Kajiado North Sub-County to support young people and reduce social challenges. Despite the presence of these groups, social problems such as drug and substance abuse, theft, defilement, rape, snatching, and gang formation continue to rise. Worryingly, many of the youth involved in these vices are members of the very empowerment groups formed to address them. This suggests that the challenge may not simply be the absence of youth groups, but rather the nature of relations among members within these groups. Non-functional relations may hinder the effectiveness of youth groups in promoting

positive behavior and social empowerment. While many existing studies have focused on the economic empowerment of youth, little attention has been given to the role of functional relations in ensuring the stability and effectiveness of youth groups. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining the role of functional group relations on social empowerment of youth groups in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County.

2. Literature Review

Functional relations in a group refer to the interdependent relationships that exist between individuals who belong to the same group, where each member's opinions, actions, and contributions affect the overall function and success of the group directly (Yoon and Leem 2021). Vital parts of human life are always organized in social groups. In large social contexts, like schools, universities, workplaces, neighborhoods, and digital online communities, people create smaller groups in which they experience a higher level of communication, safety, belonging, interdependence, social norms, and psychological well-being as compared to the rest of the social context (Homans, 2022). In social groups, individuals always create strong positive ties, such as friendship (Moody and White, 2023). However, sometimes, the interpersonal relations that connect individuals who are members of different groups tend to be weaker, neutral, or even negative.

As part of organizational climate, human relations are considered very important in the life of organizations because they determine the success of the organization (Danilwan and Dirhamsyah, 2022). Leaders of any organization ought to have good customer and employee relationships that will carry them through adverse and difficult seasons that the organization may face. Good and stable relations enable an organization to sail through struggles and peacefully resolve conflicts when they arise. Relationships are difficult, but various studies show that they can be managed. According to Stanley and Clinton (2024, in reality, organizational relationships are just like any other relationships which need a lot of effort in order to keep them a positive state. Human relations are considered to be social structure responsible for either promoting performance or impeding it and therefore, may be considered a buffer between individual skills and motivation and various work outcomes. This means that the atmosphere created in the workplace will inevitably determine the quality of the services provided to citizens (Dana et al., 2023).

Many studies concern how human relationships and interactions in organizations, the workplace, and families determine the stability of that particular social unit.

However, less has been researched on how functional relations in youth groups determine the achievement of social empowerment. Therefore, this study specifically aims at analyzing the role of group functional relations on youth social empowerment in youth groups in Kajiado North Sub-County.

2.1 Intra-group Conflict and Social Empowerment

Rodríguez and Imam (2025) view conflict as a phenomenon that arises because of competition in which the parties competing is aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each of the competitors aspires to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other competitor. Group conflict, from a global perspective, refers to the tension that exists between group members because of real or perceived differences (Muldoon et al., 2021).

According to Durmusoglu and Calantone (2023), conflict can be functional if it supports the goals and objectives of the group and helps improve performance and stability. On the other hand, anticonflict can be dysfunctional if it adversely affects group performance. Conflicts are inevitable in any group or organization due to constant changes in structures; roles become increasingly complex, thus leading to conflict. Conflicts always emerge where people work interdependently as a group (Folger et al., 2024). It is always necessary to consider group dynamics to curb and avoid unnecessary conflict (Soth, 2025). Intra-group conflict refers to a specific kind of conflict that emerges between members belonging to a group united by commonly shared interests, goals, or other identifying characteristics (Jumaa, 2022). Intra-group conflict occurs naturally in groups. This type of conflict has both positive and negative impacts on the group, depending on how the issue is approached and resolved (Luedemann and Kleinert, 2025). Group members can avoid harmful conflicts by embracing clear and open communication and remaining focused on achieving their goals.

Unlike the commonly known conflicts that may bring harm to the group, intra-group conflict may be of value to the group, depending on the nature and scenario of the conflict. According to Wahlig (2020), intragroup conflict involves verbal disagreement among group members that can lead to the formation of distinct groups opposing each other. If a group is experiencing conflict, it may frequently experience delayed progress in achieving its goals (Weingart, 2023).

According to Kohli (2023), human relations have been portrayed as playing vital roles in groups. If a group works together toward a certain goal, the desired results will be achieved, but if there is disagreement among the members,

performance will be low and inefficient. As much as conflict yields negative outcomes, it sometimes helps a particular group work on solving problems in a creative way (Gilson, 2024).

Prevention of intra-group conflict is determined by the degree to which members of the group are equipped to enable them to identify, deal with, and solve conflict. Therefore, all members should be trained in how to manage conflict. Intra-group conflict makes communication difficult between individuals and destroys personal and professional relationships, thus reducing effectiveness because it yields tension and hinders team members from performing the task (Flowers, 2023). Managing intra-group conflict is the appropriate goal since it is reducing and maintaining conflict to a manageable level is required to encourage a group's growth and achievement of its objectives (Victoria, 2022). Without disagreement, it is difficult to get commitment and cohesiveness. Although the results of intragroup conflict can lead to dissatisfaction among the group members and diminish personal relationships, some degree of intragroup conflict can be functional (Chien et al., 2024). Davis et al. (2022), argue that functional intragroup conflict results in increased communication within the group that could translate to increased cohesion, increased sense of belonging, and the achievement of the goals of the group.

Most of the youth in Kenya groups face one or more intragroup conflicts. According to Sebastian (2021), conflicts in youth groups, which at times lead to the collapse of the same, emerge mainly because of relationship and task conflicts. Such conflicts revolve around financial mismanagement, lack of commitment by members, poor leadership, hijacking of group projects by officials or some members, delayed elections, conflict of interest, and roles in the groups. These conflicts are seen when members deviate from the purpose for which the group was formed and choose to get involved in other activities, while the leaders and group officials struggle for power as well as undue conflict-solving mechanisms (Doci, 2021).

Successful and effective conflict resolution entails learning how to disagree over issues and situations such that a compromised understanding of the situation is arrived at through the creation of a solution that is aimed at benefiting the entire group and strengthening the unity among group members, hence the achievement of the group goals (Waldman and Sparr, 2023). To improve the quality of decisions, most group members intentionally seek information to resolve conflicts within their group. In groups, conflict may increase unity and cohesion as well as unite members in a common purpose. Mack (2023) argues that conflicts may redefine, keep, and create strong group boundaries, thus making the group distinct and improving cohesion and solidarity among the group members. In

addition, Mack says that conflict enhances the formation of groups and may be destructive and harmful to groups; both phenomena are subject to realignments resulting from changes in the sharing and distribution of power.

A positive conflict creates an opportunity for balancing power within a relationship and meeting members' genuine interests. Social change can be achieved because of conflict. With time, as conflicts are solved, group members learn that together they can address even personality differences and work towards solving them as a group (Lechner and Tobias, 2022). Fisher (2021) argues that a group that fights together stays together. However, according to Onyango (2022), workplace conflict has been given little attention in Kenyan courts. Therefore, understanding the main causes of disputes in Kenyan law courts is important. Mukolwe and Korir (2023) found that organizational performance in selected hotels in Kisii is affected by interpersonal conflict among the hotel employees. Their findings indicated that interpersonal conflict, relationship conflict, and task conflict all have a great impact on the success of an organization. However, none of the research was carried out in a youth group, so this study aims to evaluate the influence of intra-group conflict on social empowerment in youth groups in Kajiado North Sub-County.

Group functioning and achievement of objectives are influenced by several factors, with intra-group conflict playing a key role. While conflict can sometimes generate solutions to group problems, many scholars argue that it more often has negative effects, including member withdrawal and reduced group effectiveness. If unresolved, such conflicts can hinder groups from achieving their goals. This highlights the need to study how intra-group conflict affects youth empowerment in youth groups in Kajiado North County, Kenya.

2.2 Leader –Member relationships and group achievement of social empowerment

Leadership is the process of social influence in which an individual can mobilize the support of others in the accomplishment of a common task (Rachmad, 2022). Although an individual's ability to influence peers is determined by the composition of the group and situational demands, studies have shown that specific individual differences may make some members better at influencing other group members (Empson et al., 2023).

Generally, diligent and responsible individuals perform tasks better overall (Kapur, 2023), since they tend to be more careful and persistent when engaging in tasks. Therefore, more responsible and diligent individuals may be perceived by group members as more effective and capable than other members in the same social group

(McCullagh, 2024)). According to the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) by Le Blanc, the achievement of group goals is determined by the quality of the exchange relationship between a leader and a particular member of the group (Robert and Vandenberghe, 2021). Members' engagement is shaped by various personal and group-related factors (Alderfer, 2021). The leader-member relationship plays a vital role in achieving the group's purpose and goals. Hirvi et al. (2023) argue that in contemporary society, the dynamics of leader-member relationships have changed from the traditional view of leadership, which believed that the leader exercises full control over the members. Dinh (2021), a good relationship between leaders and members develops trust and facilitates the members to express better, perform their roles, get more engaged, and achieve desired results. Leaders serve as immediate supervisors of projects aimed at achieving group goals. Therefore, the degree to which the group members interact with the leader depends on the perception of the members towards the quality of the leader-member exchange behavior. This means that group members with better leader-member exchange relationships tend to possess a higher level of motivation and less stress (Liang et al., 2022).

Leaders enhance effective performance by the group members by influencing and leading them to come up with commonly shared norms, values, and expectations that will drive them toward the achievement of the group's goals (Jerab and Mabrouk, 2023). An autocratic style of leadership, commonly known as authoritarian, is a form of leadership characterized by the leader being more self-centered, power-oriented, and controlling (Van de Vliert, 2022). An autocratic leader, in most cases, fails to unify and retain members within the group due to the punitive nature of exercising control. The group may end up being unstable, causing members to prematurely exit the group, hence failure in achieving the goals of the group. The democratic leadership style is the second type. It is the opposite of autocratic leadership because members feel involved, appreciated, and respected by their democratic leaders (Jaafar et al, 2021).

According to Giltinane (2023), transformational leaders aim to develop an individual member's potential by growing their skills, abilities, and self-esteem as they lead them. The main difference between leaders and non-leaders is that leaders can direct other group members' activities (Araujo et al., 2024).

For a group to survive and achieve its goals, democratic and transformational styles of leadership are the most suitable (Malik et al, 2022). A leader and his or her way of leadership greatly affect group members' behavior and, in turn, affect the entire performance of the group. With the above discussion on the leader-member relationship and

leadership style, it is therefore necessary to investigate how the leader-member relationship in youth groups affects the social empowerment of youth in Kajiado North County, Kenya.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Empowerment Theory by Marc Zimmerman (2000), and the Social Exchange Theory (SET) by George Homans (1958).

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment Theory, as described by Marc A. Zimmerman (2000), explains how individuals, communities, and organizations gain control over their lives, make decisions (autonomy), and engage themselves in actions that lead to desired outcomes. Zimmerman's model highlights that when youth develop a strong belief in their own capabilities, self-esteem, leadership efficacy, and civic agency, they are more likely to impact their environment positively. The theory insists on the importance of increasing individuals' and communities' control over their lives. This theory shows the significance of participation, capacity-building, and collaboration to boost positive individual and collective outcomes within communities. According to Zimmerman, empowerment is a process rather than a static state; by this, he means that it is an ongoing process and varies across different levels of society. Empowerment theory recognizes the impact of social structures and systemic barriers on individuals, emphasizing the need to address power imbalances through collaborative and participatory endeavors. This is referred to as collective and collaborative efforts. By creating a sense of collective efficacy, empowerment theory seeks to magnify the impact of communal engagement and solidarity. Empowerment theory recognizes the existence of systemic barriers that hinder individuals and communities from achieving their optimum productivity. The theory aims to identify and confront these obstacles, advocating for social, political, and economic reforms that promote equity and inclusivity, hence creating a conducive environment for individuals to thrive. Removing systemic barriers calls for multiple approaches that involve examining and redesigning policies, practices, and attitudes to create a more inclusive and equitable environment.

From the above explanations, social empowerment entails building confidence and autonomy in people, intending to enable them to make better decisions and live as expected in society. Empowerment theory also emphasizes how empowerment can be achieved through collaborative and collective efforts. This therefore shows the importance of the formation of youth groups that are aimed at

empowering them socially. Therefore, in youth groups, a positive and supportive environment is needed for the group members to optimally achieve the group goals of social empowerment. In Kajiado County, supportive intragroup relations such as recognition, encouragement, and peer affirmation can significantly enhance each member's self-confidence and leadership sense. This intragroup support fosters intrapersonal empowerment, enabling youth to see themselves as capable of initiating social change.

While Zimmerman's Empowerment Theory (2000) offers a rich understanding of social empowerment, it has notable limitations when applied to the context of youth group dynamics. Zimmerman's framework excels at highlighting how individuals gain control, build agency, and engage in collective action; however, it tends to emphasize structural and psychological facets while underplaying the relational mechanisms that sustain group cohesion and functionality. It does not fully account for how perceived equitable exchanges among group members impact ongoing engagement and cooperation

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) by George Homans (1958), is a great tool that can be used to analyze relationships and human behavior. It explains how people develop relationships by analyzing the costs and benefits of interactions between these relationships or social groups. The theory is founded on the idea that people choose to seek rewards and avoid punishments in all their interactions with others. It is a measurement designed to examine how much effort someone invests in a relationship. The uniqueness of this theory is that it does not only measure relationships with emotional metrics but also its systematic processes rely on mathematics and logic to determine balance within a relationship. Humans typically seek out rewards and avoid punishments. According to the Social exchange theory, the "rewards" in these relationships refer to typically intangible concepts, such as prestige, respect, or a reciprocal action. The symbiosis stemming from these exchanges can form relationships that are mutually beneficial, as long as the exchanges themselves remain consistent. On the other hand, "costs" in this theory are things that a person may see as negatives in a relationship. According to the theory, a worthwhile relationship will be as far away from the cost category as possible. Even if there are a few costs involved in the relationship and human behavior dictates there probably will be if enough positive traits outweigh the negative traits, then the costs hold no value. If the costs far outweigh the benefits, it may indicate that it is time to move on. In a social group setting, this can mean exiting or parting ways with friends.

In the context of functional intra-group relations, Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains how interactions within a group are determined by the exchange of rewards and costs among members. The theory posits that individuals engage in relationships and group activities based on perceived benefits, reciprocity, and fairness. Group members retain their memberships, expecting fair exchanges of resources, support, and recognition. If they feel that they contribute more than they receive, they may be dissatisfied, hence conflicts or disagreements. Functional groups are based on trust, where members put in their effort and expect returns in terms of respect, assistance and growth. However, when trust is violated, group cohesion and unity become weak. When conflicts arise in a group, members evaluate their relationships based on past interactions. If there have been positive exchanges in the past, members are willing to resolve their conflict. On the other hand, a history of negative exchanges in the group may escalate divisions.

Therefore, Social Exchange Theory provides a blueprint for understanding how social and material exchanges sustain or weaken intra-group functionality. Groups that encourage equitable, reciprocal relationships tend to be more cohesive and productive.

3. Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive research design, which incorporated both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding of how intra-group relations influence youth social empowerment in Kajiado North Sub-County. It was carried out in Kajiado North Sub-County, which is one of the five sub-counties that make up Kajiado County, Kenya. Kajiado North Sub-County specifically is situated in the northernmost part of Kajiado County, adjacent to Nairobi. The sub-county has a population of approximately 306,596 persons. Administratively, it is subdivided into four wards, namely Ongata Rongai, Nakamuraya, Olkeri, and Oloolua.

The target population for this study comprised the youth who have joined various social empowerment groups in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya, as well as the youth officers and group leaders who play a key role in guiding, supervising, and coordinating these groups. Within Kajiado North Sub-County, numerous youth groups are formally registered with the Department of Social Development and operate under various local and county frameworks.

The sample size comprised 300 youth groups spread over three wards in Kajiado North Sub-County. Slovin's formula was applied, yielding a sample of 171 youth groups from these wards. Purposive sampling was used to

select youth groups from the three wards in the sub-county based on their relevance to the study, and stratified sampling was applied within the selected youth groups to ensure that members from different categories were fairly represented in the study.

Qualitative data were collected through structured interviews. In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with selected group members, guided by a carefully designed FGD guide, to allow participants to share and reflect on their experiences and views. Quantitative data were collected via a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions administered to youth-group members.

Qualitative data were thematically analyzed and presented as narratives, while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tables, charts, and graphs, and frequencies, coded and entered the computer using the qualitative Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 26) program.

Ethical considerations were observed as per Kenyan research regulations. The researcher obtained ethical approval from the Kisii University ISERC, and a research

permit was secured from NACOSTI, followed by authorization from the Kajiado County Education Office. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents after explaining the purpose of the study, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and informing participants of their rights during the research.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

Out of the targeted 171 respondents, all completed and returned the questionnaires, yielding a 100% response rate. The respondents comprised 56.1% females and 43.9% males. Most respondents (81.9%) were aged 18–25 years, 15.2% were aged 26–30 years, and 2.9% were aged 31–35 years. Most respondents had a college-level education (84.2%). In terms of occupation, 44.4% were students, 30.4% engaged in business activities, 21.1% were unemployed, and 4.1% were formally employed. Respondents were drawn from diverse ethnic communities, including Kalenjin, Luo, Luhya, Maasai, Kikuyu, and other ethnic groups. This is shown in Table 1 below

Table 1: Respondents' socio-demographics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	75	43.9
	Female	96	56.1
Age	18-25	140	81.9
	26-30	26	15.2
	31-35	5	2.9
Occupation	Student	76	44.4
	Business	52	30.4
	Unemployed	36	21.1
	Formal employment	7	4.1

4.2 Group Functional Relations and Social Empowerment

This focuses on group functional relations, including member interaction, collaboration, and management of internal processes. It assesses aspects such as fair leadership role allocation, conflict resolution mechanisms, interpersonal relationships, and how disagreements are handled within the group. These factors are important in shaping participation, cohesion, trust, and the overall social

empowerment of youth group members.

4.2.1 Leadership Assignment Method

The findings on leadership assignment methods show that election is the most common approach at 50%, followed by appointment at 30%, volunteering at 15%, and consensus at 5%, indicating that leadership selection is largely driven by formal voting processes within the groups.

Table 2: Leadership Assignment Method

METHOD	Frequency	Percent
Election	86	50
Appointment	51	30
Volunteering	26	15
Consensus	9	5

The findings indicate that leadership roles within the youth groups are assigned through a combination of methods, including elections, appointments, volunteering, and, to a lesser extent, consensus. Elections emerge as the most used approach, suggesting that many groups embrace democratic principles, which promote fairness, transparency, and equal opportunity among

members.

4.2.1.1 Leadership Distribution Fairness

The findings show that 88.3% of respondents perceived the distribution of leadership as fair, while 11.7% felt it was not. This is shown on the table below

Table 3: Leadership Distribution Fairness

LEADERSHIP DISTRIBUTION FAIRNESS	Frequency	Percent
Yes	151	88.3
No	20	11.7
Total	171	100

The findings indicate that most respondents perceive the distribution of leadership roles within their youth groups as fair, suggesting that leadership selection processes are generally transparent, inclusive, and acceptable to most members. This perception of fairness is important in strengthening trust, cooperation, and satisfaction among group members, which in turn enhances participation and social empowerment. However, a small proportion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, implying that there may still be concerns related to bias, exclusion, or unequal opportunities in leadership allocation. A member of an empowerment group, expressed her dissatisfaction with how their leaders were chosen.

are men. Women are not represented in the leadership.” (Respondent 2, 19 years)

Such perceptions, if not addressed, could negatively affect group cohesion and the effectiveness of Intragroup relations.

4.2.2 Interaction Challenges

The findings show that 34.5% of respondents reported facing challenges when interacting and working with other group members, while 65.5% indicated that they do not experience such challenges.

“Our leaders are appointed unfairly because most of them

Table 4: Interaction Challenges

INTERACTION CHALLENGES	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	34.5
No	112	65.5
Total	171	100

The table above suggests that most members can interact and collaborate effectively, indicating relatively strong intragroup relations. However, a significant minority still encounters difficulties. These challenges may arise from differences in personality, communication styles, cultural backgrounds, or competing interests, which can hinder effective teamwork and participation. In the context of social empowerment, such interaction challenges may limit members’ ability to fully engage, share ideas, and

benefit from group activities. One of the group members in a Focus Group Discussion expressed his frustration with not being heard by others in the group.

“Because of the negative attitude that my fellow members have towards me, I

Always choose not to give my ideas because they will not be considered.

(Respondent 3, 23 years)

Therefore, while the overall group environment appears supportive, addressing these interaction barriers is essential to strengthen cohesion, enhance participation, and improve the overall effectiveness of youth groups.

4.2.3 Presence of Intra-Group Conflicts or Disagreements

The findings show that 62.6% of respondents reported experiencing some form of disagreement or conflict within their youth groups, while 37.4% reported not having. This is shown on the table below

Table 5: Presence of Intra-Group Conflicts or Disagreements

PRESENCE OF INTRA-GROUP CONFLICT	Frequency	Percent
Yes	107	62.6
No	64	37.4
Total	171	100

The findings show that 62.6% of respondents reported having experienced some form of disagreement or conflict within their youth groups, while 37.4% indicated that they had not. This suggests that conflict is common in most groups, as is expected in diverse settings where members have different views, interests, and backgrounds. During a focus group discussion with a boda-boda self-help group, one of the members said,

“We usually experience conflict in our group because here, we do our merry-go-round weekly, and some of us fail to contribute, yet we contribute to them

This brings a lot of disagreements” (Respondent 4,26 years old)

Therefore, when well-managed, such conflicts can promote understanding, strengthen relationships, and improve decision-making. However, if poorly handled, they may hinder cooperation, reduce participation, and negatively affect the social empowerment of group members.

4.2.4 Conflict Resolution Methods

Regarding conflict resolution methods, mediation (40%) was the most used method, followed by dialogue (25%), negotiation (20%), arbitration (10%), and consensus (5%). This is shown below

Table 6: Conflict Resolution Methods

METHOD	Frequency	Percent
Mediation	68	40
Dialogue	43	25.2
Negotiation	34	20
Arbitration	17	10
Consensus	9	5

The findings indicate that mediation is the most used conflict resolution method (40%), suggesting a preference for involving a neutral party to maintain fairness and group cohesion. Dialogue (25%) and negotiation (20%) are also widely used, reflecting the importance of communication and mutual understanding among members. In contrast, arbitration (10%) and consensus (5%) are less preferred, possibly due to their restrictive or demanding nature. Overall, the results show a collaborative approach to conflict resolution, which supports strong intra-group relations and enhances social empowerment among youth

groups.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This paper confirms that leadership in most groups is mainly chosen through elections, which reflects the use of democratic processes. This helps promote fairness and gives members a chance to participate in decision-making. Other methods, like appointment and volunteering, also exist, showing some flexibility, although not all members

are equally involved in leadership decisions. The study also found that most members feel that leadership roles are distributed fairly. This creates trust and satisfaction within the group, which encourages members to participate more actively and feel empowered. However, a few members still feel that leadership is not fair, especially in cases where some groups are not well represented. In terms of interaction, the findings revealed that most members can work well together, showing strong cooperation within the group. However, some members still face challenges when interacting with others. These challenges can limit their participation and reduce their ability to benefit fully from group activities. The study further found that conflicts and disagreements are common in many youth groups. This is normal because members come from different backgrounds and have different opinions. What is important is how these conflicts are handled. The findings showed that most groups use peaceful and cooperative methods such as mediation, dialogue, and negotiation to resolve conflicts. Therefore, the findings indicate that when group relations are well managed through fair leadership, good interaction, and proper conflict resolution, members are more likely to participate, feel included, and become socially empowered. However, when there are challenges in interaction, unfair leadership, or poorly managed conflicts, social empowerment can be weakened. Functional relations greatly affect social empowerment. Fair leadership, good interaction among members, and effective conflict resolution promote trust, unity, and active participation. However, challenges such as conflicts and interaction difficulties can weaken group cohesion and reduce empowerment if not well managed.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that;

1. The government and relevant stakeholders should develop policies that promote inclusivity within youth groups.
2. There is also a need for policies that strengthen youth participation in decision-making processes.
3. Youth should be actively involved in leadership, planning, and implementation of programs that affect them, as this enhances their sense of ownership, belonging, and empowerment.
4. There should be the development of policies that support fair and transparent leadership structures within youth groups. This includes promoting democratic leadership practices and ensuring equal opportunities for all members to take up leadership roles.

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