

# An Investigation of Socio-Economic Factors affecting Sustainability of Youth Group Enterprises in Kenya: A Case of Imenti South Sub County, Meru County

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## Abstract

Many youth group enterprises disintegrate even before take-off. Statistics show that many youth group enterprises break up even before take-off. It has been noted that out of the total number of registered youth enterprises, only 10 to 15% of the youth groups enterprises are operational. Another 30% of the youth group enterprises are experiencing financial and mismanagement problems and are at the verge of collapsing and the rest are either dormant or inactive. Youth group enterprises are an important contributor to the Kenyan economy accounting for 12–14% of GDP. With about 70% of such enterprises located in rural areas, the sector has a high potential for contributing to rural development. The government willingness to fund the youth group enterprises has led to an increase in the number of groups formed country wide. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the effect of socio-economic factors influencing sustainability of youth group enterprises in Kenya. Specifically the study investigated the effect of entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial culture, investment practices and mentorship on the sustainability of youth group enterprises. The study employed a mixed methodology research design. Descriptive survey design research is concerned with collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the study subjects. While inferential methodology is concerned with giving the direction of the relationships between the study variables. The study population comprised of District Officers, Division youth officer, Secretaries, Youth group enterprises chairpersons and Committees Members. This study used semi structured and unstructured questions and likert scale questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed into 6 sections. Section A contains the bio data of the respondents. While section B to F were based on research objectives. Both binary and likert scale were use in the questionnaire the intent of this scale was that the statements represent different aspects of the same attitude. Likert scale was simple to construct, and easy for the respondents to read, understand and respond appropriately to the statements put across. It was specifically use self-administered drop and pick questionnaires to participants totaling to forty six (46). The findings of the regression also showed that entrepreneurial orientation, mentorship and investment practices had a significant relationship with sustainability of youth group enterprises in Imenti Sub-county in Meru County. The relationship between entrepreneurial culture and sustainability of youth group enterprises was insignificant. Therefore, this study concluded that stakeholders in this area should address these challenges if the sustainability of these enterprises is to be enhanced. The study recommends that Youth Enterprise Fund, The Women Enterprise Fund, and the Uwezo Fund among other initiatives should offer entrepreneurship training and mentorship to youth groups before funds are loaned out to these enterprises. Stakeholders in youth group enterprises should organized mentorship for infant youth group enterprises. This will enable to overcome some of the challenges affecting them.

**Keywords: Sustainability of Youth Group Enterprises in Kenya, An Investigation of Socio-Economic Factors**

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the study

There is no universally agreed upon definition of 'youth'. Youth as a category is socially constructed. The Kenya National Youth Policy (2005) defines youth as those of age between 15 to 30 years. The pan African youth charter (PAYC) shares this line of thinking, but '...does not exclude young people below and above the specified age range who may be engaged in this transition'. This paper conceptualizes youth based on age and looseness of boundaries between youth and youth, and youth and adults, which comprises the attributes of PAYC conceptualization (Rasheed and Rasheed, 2004).

About innovation and enhanced productivity. This calls for new forms of cooperation between government, business and society to ensure that the quality of present and future life (and employment) is optimized whilst safeguarding the sustainability of the planet.

Thompson (2011) noted that enterprises need to ensure that their core business activities continue to add value and are undertaken efficiently and effectively. Enterprises also need a supportive enabling environment characterized by, among other things, the existence of open, rule based, predictable and non-discriminatory markets and a non-corrupt and well-governed economy. Enterprises benefit from operating in value chains characterized by high quality industries, with prosperous consumers

and investors. Enterprises also benefit from enterprise-level, sectoral and national mechanisms for effective social dialogue (Lehtonen, 2004).

**B. Specific Objectives**

- To assess the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the sustainability of youth group enterprises in Imenti South Sub County.
- To investigate the effect of entrepreneurial culture on the sustainability of youth group enterprises in Imenti South Sub County.
- To establish the effect of mentorship on the sustainability of youth group enterprises in Imenti South Sub County.
- To determine the effect of investment practices on the sustainability of youth enterprises in Imenti South Sub County.

**II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

According to Honwana (2008), large numbers of youth operate in the margins of society. This circumstance may lead some of them into delinquency, either as a means of expression of frustration, as a show of power which they feel deprived of or as a means of survival (ibid). There is need to save them from this predicament. On the economic front, poverty, unemployment and underemployment have curtailed youth interest to commit their energy, intellect and creativity to their good as well as that of the society (Tsegaye 2006).

Kenya is a young nation, with 75% of its population being under the age of 30 years and 22 percent being between the ages of 15 to 24 years. For Kenyan young people and for young people worldwide- the critical transition from childhood to young adulthood is delicate and challenging and is dependent on support and guidance from the family, community, school, and society at large.

Table - 1  
Descriptive Result for Entrepreneurship Orientation

	SD	D	NI	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Academic qualifications in entrepreneurship has effect on sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	2.3%	16.3%	2.3%	62.8%	16.3%	4	1
<i>Training in entrepreneurship as an effect on sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	9.3%	11.6%	7.0%	25.6%	46.5%	4	1
<i>Number of workshops attended as an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	9.3%	16.3%	7.0%	39.5%	27.9%	4	1
<i>Period of on-job training as an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	0.0%	4.7%	20.9%	55.8%	18.6%	4	1
<i>Experience gained in entrepreneurship as an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	7.0%	4.7%	9.3%	39.5%	39.5%	4	1

Table - 2  
Descriptive Result for Entrepreneurial Culture

	No	Yes	Total
<i>Youths face discrimination purely on the ground of age</i>	27.9%	72.1%	100.0%
<i>Society perceives youth as irresponsible troubleshooters which contributes to difficulties they face in obtaining credit</i>	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%
<i>There is an assumption that white –collar jobs are best and little encouragement offered to youth to take up the blue collar jobs</i>	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%
<i>There is a lack of effective communication between youths and society at large</i>	27.9%	72.1%	100.0%
<i>In Kenya the extended family is still a reality, this affects many youth’s organizations as individual incomes are use to cater for siblings, thus many may end defaulting loan payments</i>	20.9%	79.1%	100.0%

The results in the table below further show the descriptive results for the effect of entrepreneurial culture. SD stand for strongly disagree, D represents disagree, NI stands for no idea, A stands for agree while SA stands for strongly agree. The findings in the table below show that 46.5% and 20.9% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that youths who always face discrimination purely on the ground of age have an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprises. Results further show that 53.5% and 23.3% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the societies which perceives youth as irresponsible troubleshooters and contributes to difficulties they face in obtaining credit have an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprise. The results also show that 60.5 and 30.2% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that groups that lack effective communication between youths and society at large have an effect on sustainability of youth enterprises.

Table - 3  
Descriptive Result for Entrepreneurial Culture

	SD	D	NI	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Youths who always face discrimination purely on the ground of age have an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprises.</i>	14.0%	9.3%	9.3%	46.5%	20.9%	4	1
<i>Societies which perceives youth as irresponsible troubleshooters and contributes to difficulties they face in obtaining credit have an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprise</i>	4.7%	9.3%	9.3%	53.5%	23.3%	4	1

<i>The assumption that white –collar jobs are best and little encouragement is offered to youth to take up the blue collar jobs have an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	14.0%	11.6%	4.7%	27.9%	41.9%	4	1
<i>Groups that lack effective communication between youths and society at large have an effect on sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	2.3%	4.7%	2.3%	60.5%	30.2%	4	1
<i>In Kenya the extended family is still a reality, this always affects many youth’s organizations as individual incomes are used to cater for siblings, thus many may end defaulting loan payments hence influencing the sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	16.3%	9.3%	9.3%	48.8%	16.3%	3	1

**C. Mentorship**

Table - 4  
Descriptive Result for Mentorship

	No	Yes	Total
<i>There is an open forum where old successful business people talk to young regularly</i>	83.7%	16.3%	100.0%
<i>Successful older business people invite young entrepreneurs for induction in entrepreneurship</i>	86.0%	14.0%	100.0%
<i>Older business people facilitate up-coming young entrepreneurs by inviting them to their business premises</i>	72.1%	27.9%	100.0%

Table - 5  
Descriptive Result for Mentorship

	SD	D	NI	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Open forums where old successful business people talk to young members regularly</i>	7.0%	9.3%	20.9%	39.5%	23.3%	4	1
<i>Successful older business people who invite young entrepreneurs for induction in entrepreneurship</i>	4.7%	7.0%	16.3%	48.8%	23.3%	4	1
<i>Older business people who facilitate up-coming young entrepreneurs have an</i>	7.0%	4.7%	11.6%	51.2%	25.6%	4	1
<i>Older people who believe and embrace youth business ideas</i>	4.7%	7.0%	20.9%	46.5%	20.9%	4	1
<i>Youth who inherit and own property as soon as they get their national identity cards</i>	7.0%	7.0%	11.6%	41.9%	32.6%	4	1
<i>older generation who delegates business leadership effectively to the young generation</i>	9.3%	9.3%	20.9%	30.2%	30.2%	4	1
<i>Youth with equal political and economic representation in governance of resources have an effect on the sustainability of youth enterprises</i>	2.3%	4.7%	7.0%	39.5%	46.5%	4	1

The results in the table above indicated that the respondents agreed that lack of mentorship programmes on entrepreneurship effect the sustainability of the youth group enterprises in Imenti sub-county.

**D. Investment Practices**

Table – 6  
Descriptive Result for Investment Practices

	No	Yes	Total
	N %	N %	N %
<i>Groups always operate with a full current account</i>	76.7%	23.3%	100.0%
<i>Most group members have done accounts</i>	67.4%	32.6%	100.0%
<i>Businesses always employ a qualified finance manager</i>	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%
<i>The businesses always insure against risk</i>	83.7%	16.3%	100.0%
<i>Record keeping and books of accounts are always available to members and monitored and evaluated effectively</i>	86.0%	14.0%	100.0%

The study further sought to find out whether investment practices affected sustainability of youth group enterprises. The results in the tables below reveal that respondents agreed with most of the statements. The results show that 48.8% and 34.9% agree and strongly agreed that groups which operate a full current account have an effect on sustainability of youth group enterprises than those that don’t have. Similarly, 32.6% and 27.9% agreed and strongly agreed that members who have done accounts have an effect on the sustainability of youth group enterprises. The results further show that 50.8% and 32.9% agreed and strongly agreed that members that have record keeping and books of accounts availed to members, monitored and evaluated effectively have an effect on the sustainability of youth group enterprises than those that don’t keep records. SD stand for strongly disagree, D represents disagree, NI stands for no idea, A stands for agree while SA stands for strongly agree.

Table - 7  
Descriptive Result for Investment Practices

	SD	D	NI	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Groups which operate a full current account have an effect on sustainability of youth group enterprises than those that don’t have</i>	2.3%	9.3%	4.7%	48.8%	34.9%	4	1.00

Members who have done accounts have an effect on the sustainability of youth group enterprises	11.6%	16.3%	11.6%	32.6%	27.9%	3	1.37
Businesses that always employ a qualified finance manager have an effect on the sustainability of youth group enterprises	4.7%	4.7%	11.6%	41.9%	37.2%	4	1.06
Businesses that always insure against risk have an effect on the sustainability of youth group enterprises than those not insured	4.7%	16.3%	14.0%	39.5%	25.6%	4	1.17
Members that have record keeping and books of accounts availed to members, monitored and evaluated effectively have an effect on the sustainability of youth group enterprises than those that don't keep records	2.3%	9.3%	4.7%	50.8%	32.9%	4	1.00

**E. Sustainability of Youth Group Enterprises**

Table - 8  
Descriptive Result for Sustainability of Youth Group Enterprises

	SD	D	NI	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
Our enterprise has recorded improvement in gross and net profit since it was formed	11.60%	7.00%	11.60%	46.50%	23.30%	4	1
Our capital structure keeps growing every year	7.00%	14.00%	11.60%	30.20%	37.20%	4	1
Business efficiency of our enterprise improves every year	2.30%	14.00%	9.30%	39.50%	34.90%	4	1
Our enterprise has continued to increase the number of employees	11.60%	4.70%	14.00%	37.20%	32.60%	4	1
Our enterprise has continued to increase the number of sales and productions	11.60%	9.30%	9.30%	30.20%	39.50%	4	1

Table - 9  
Correlation Results of Variables

		Investment Practices	Entrepreneurial Orientation	Mentorship	Entrepreneurial Culture
Investment practices	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	43			
entrepreneurial orientation	Pearson Correlation	.522**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0			
	N	43			
mentorship	Pearson Correlation	.391**	.337*		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	0.027		
	N	43	43		
entrepreneurial culture	Pearson Correlation	-0.14	-0.1	-0.217	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.37	0.522	0.163	
	N	43	43	43	
sustainability	Pearson Correlation	.417**	.479**	.479**	.314*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005	0.001	0.001	0.041
	N	43	43	43	43

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

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

The finding of this study conquers with those of Holland, (2005) who argued that young Africans need access to both decent formal education and opportunities to acquire a range of vocational and life skills to actively participate in all spheres of an increasingly knowledge-intensive society, today as young citizens and tomorrow as the continent's future leaders.

Table - 10  
Analysis of Variance Results (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.093	1	8.093	12.196	.001b
Residual	27.207	41	0.664		
Total	35.3	42			
a Dependent Variable: sustainability of youth enterprises					
b Predictors: (Constant), entrepreneurial orientation					

Table - 11  
Regression Analysis Results of Entrepreneurial Orientation

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.654	0.616		2.683	0.01
Entrepreneurial orientation	0.549	0.157	0.479	3.492	0.001
a Dependent Variable: sustainability of youth enterprises					

The findings of the regression also show that entrepreneurial orientation was significantly related to sustainability of youth group enterprises in Imenti Sub-county in Meru County. This because its p-value (0.001) was less than the significant level of 0.05 adopted for this study. The results show that a change of one unit in entrepreneurial orientation will cause a change of 0.403 units in sustainability of youth group enterprises.

The finding of this study concurs with those of Holland, (2005) who argued that young Africans need access to both decent formal education and opportunities to acquire a range of vocational and life skills to actively participate in all spheres of an increasingly knowledge-intensive society, today as young citizens and tomorrow as the continent's future leaders.

**F. Effects of Entrepreneurial culture on Sustainability of Youth Group Enterprises**

The value of R-square indicates that entrepreneurial culture accounts for 29% of the variation in sustainability of youth group enterprises.

Table – 12  
Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>R</i>	<i>0.314</i>
<i>R Square</i>	<i>0.298</i>
<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>0.276</i>
<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>	<i>0.88107</i>

The P value (0.41) for the F-test of overall significance test is less than significance level; therefore we reject the null-hypothesis that the model is not fit and conclude that the model provides a better fit than the intercept-only model.

Table - 13  
Analysis of Variance Results (ANOVA)

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Regression</i>	<i>3.473</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3.473</i>	<i>4.473</i>	<i>.041b</i>
<i>Residual</i>	<i>31.828</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>0.776</i>		
<i>Total</i>	<i>35.3</i>	<i>42</i>			
<i>a Dependent Variable: sustainability of youth enterprises</i>					
<i>b Predictors: (Constant), entrepreneurial culture</i>					

Table - 14  
Regression Analysis Results for Entrepreneurial Culture

	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>(Constant)</i>	<i>5.331</i>	<i>0.753</i>		<i>7.076</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Entrepreneurial culture</i>	<i>-0.422</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>-0.314</i>	<i>-2.115</i>	<i>0.041</i>
<i>a Dependent Variable: sustainability of youth enterprises</i>					

The study results show that entrepreneurial culture has a negative significant relationship (B=-0.422, p=0.041) with sustainability of youth group enterprises in Imenti sub-county in Meru County. The findings agree with the findings of Holland, (2005), Ranneberger (2010) and Bwisa (2004) who all argued that education and opportunities to acquire a range of vocational and life skills affects the ability to actively participate in all spheres of an increasingly knowledge-intensive society

**G. Effects of Mentorship on Sustainability of Youth Group Enterprises**

The value of R-square indicates that mentorship accounts for 22.9% of the variation in sustainability of youth group enterprises.

Table - 15  
Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>R</i>	<i>0.479</i>
<i>R Square</i>	<i>0.229</i>
<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>0.211</i>
<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>	<i>0.81454</i>

The P value (0.01) for the F-test of overall significance test is less than significance level; therefore we reject the null-hypothesis that the model is not fit and conclude that the model provides a better fit than the intercept-only model.

Table - 16  
Analysis of Variance Results (ANOVA)

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Regression</i>	<i>8.098</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>8.098</i>	<i>12.205</i>	<i>.001b</i>
<i>Residual</i>	<i>27.203</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>0.663</i>		
<i>Total</i>	<i>35.3</i>	<i>42</i>			
<i>a Dependent Variable: sustainability of youth enterprises</i>					
<i>b Predictors: (Constant), mentorship</i>					

Table - 17  
Regression Analysis Results for Mentorship

	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>(Constant)</i>	<i>0.877</i>	<i>0.835</i>		<i>1.05</i>	<i>0.3</i>

mentorship	0.757	0.217	0.479	3.494	0.001
a Dependent Variable: sustainability of youth enterprises					

## H. Effects of Investment Practices on Sustainability of Youth Group Enterprises

The results of model summary indicate that investment practices accounts for 37.4% of the variation in sustainability of youth group enterprises.

Table - 18  
Model Summary

Model	1
R	0.417
R Square	0.374
Adjusted R Square	0.354
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.84333

The ANOVA results indicate the model used to link the independent variable to dependent variable was significant (p=0.005).

Table - 19  
Analysis of Variance Results (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.141	1	6.141	8.635	.005b
Residual	29.159	41	0.711		
Total	35.3	42			
a Dependent Variable: sustainability of youth enterprises					
b Predictors: (Constant), Investment practices					

Table - 20  
Regression Analysis Results for Investment Practices

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.944	0.632		3.074	0.004
Investment practices	0.472	0.161	0.417	2.938	0.005
a Dependent Variable: sustainability of youth enterprises					

### I. Optimal Model

$$\text{Sustainability of youth group enterprises} = 1.944 + 0.472 (\text{Investment practices}) + 0.403 (\text{Entrepreneurial orientation}) + 0.498 (\text{mentorship}) + -0.283 (\text{Entrepreneurial culture}) + E.$$

## III. CONCLUSION

Youth group enterprises are among the small and medium sizes enterprises that play a major role on economic development. Youth group enterprises have potential of creating jobs and revenue generation not just for individual members but also to county governments and national government at large.

Despite the large impact of these youth group enterprises have on economic development, little is being done to help these enterprises overcome some of the challenges they face include Entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial culture, mentorship and investment practices.

### A. Recommendations

Based on the study findings this study made the following recommendations;

#### 1) Entrepreneurship Orientation

The need for training in entrepreneurial competencies has been emphasized in many policy and scholarly documents. This further this by recommending that Youth Enterprise Fund, The Women Enterprise Fund, and the Uwezo Fund among other initiatives should offer entrepreneurship training to youth before funds are loaned out to these enterprises.

#### 2) Entrepreneurship Culture

Despite the many challenges and difficulties of the youth group's enterprises, the sector has great potential for increased employment creation. Therefore, the study recommends that youth in secondary schools should be brought up in a culture that encourages entrepreneurship in order to increase their entrepreneurship knowledge.

#### 3) Mentorship

Mentorship in enterprises operations has major contributions to sustainability of youth enterprises. Stakeholders in youth group enterprises should organized mentorship for infant youth group enterprises. This will enable to overcome some of the challenges affecting them.

#### 4) Investment Practices

This study recommends that infant youth group enterprises should be taught some of the investment practices such as businesses risks, record keeping practices and books of accounts. This will enable them to track the progress of their enterprises and they can easily detect when their enterprises are performing poorly.

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