**Leadership strategies: Can they Alleviate Household Poverty?
A case Study of Ruhehe Sub-County, Uganda**

**Abstract**

Leadership strategies play a role in sustainable household poverty eradication in Ruhehe Sub-County, Uganda, as examined through Adaptive Leadership Theory. This study employed a quantitative approach with correlational and survey designs to analyse the relationship between leadership strategies and poverty reduction. A sample of 151 respondents was selected from a target population of 242 using Yamane’s formula, with stratified, proportionate, and simple random sampling ensuring fair representation. Data collection involved researcher- and self-administered questionnaires, while descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including hypothesis testing at a 0.05 significance level, guided data analysis. Findings revealed a weak but significant positive correlation between leadership and poverty eradication (r = 0.280, p = 0.002), suggesting a modest yet statistically meaningful association. Regression analysis further confirmed this effect (β = 0.227, t = 2.293, p = 0.024), demonstrating that leadership strategies contribute to poverty alleviation. Although leadership strategies influence poverty reduction, their impact remains limited, highlighting the need for complementary socio-economic interventions. Strengthening community participation and enhancing leadership training could improve outcomes. This study’s originality lies in its contextualised application of Adaptive Leadership Theory to poverty eradication, providing empirical insights for policymakers and development practitioners seeking sustainable solutions.

**Keywords:** Leadership Strategies, Transformation, Sustainable, Household Poverty, Poverty Eradication

**1.0 Introduction**

Addressing household poverty demands a comprehensive approach that incorporates effective leadership strategies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2020). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises poverty eradication as a fundamental global priority and an essential condition for sustainable progress (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Leadership plays a crucial role in designing and executing policies that target the root causes of poverty, facilitate inclusive economic expansion (World Bank, 2020), and strengthen social protection frameworks (International Labour Organization, 2020). Implementing well-structured strategies to address poverty’s underlying factors requires strong leadership that promotes inclusive economic advancement (OECD, 2020) and establishes effective social protection mechanisms. The World Bank highlights the importance of policy decisions that drive sustained and inclusive growth, minimise inequalities (World Bank, 2022), and safeguard vulnerable populations from economic shocks (World Bank, 2019). Achieving sustainable household poverty eradication requires long-term solutions that not only elevate families out of poverty but also prevent future setbacks, ensuring economic stability and an improved standard of living (World Bank, 2022). Leadership committed to addressing the needs of marginalised communities remains crucial for fostering social and economic inclusion, enhancing well-being, and empowering disadvantaged populations through equitable policies and initiatives (UNDP, 2020).

Uganda has achieved considerable progress in reducing household poverty, with the national poverty rate declining from 56% in 1993 to 21.4% in 2016 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This progress has resulted from deliberate national strategies such as the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) (Government of Uganda, 1997) and the National Development Plans (Government of Uganda, 2010), which have prioritised key sectors, including agriculture, education, and infrastructure. Regional disparities remain a significant challenge, as poverty levels continue to be higher in the Northern and Eastern regions (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Economic vulnerability persists, with 41% of the population living on less than $1.90 per day as of 2020 (World Bank, 2022). The government introduced the Parish Development Model in 2022 to transition subsistence households into income-generating entities (Government of Uganda, 2022). Ensuring sustained poverty reduction remains a complex task due to economic shocks (World Bank, 2019), regional inequalities (UNDP, 2020), and the necessity for improved access to quality education and healthcare services (WHO, 2019).

Household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-county, Mitooma District, presents unique challenges. Local leaders have highlighted high poverty rates and financial burdens, particularly during the ‘back to school’ period, as key factors contributing to domestic violence and rising crime levels (Boonafm, 2024). Land conflicts linked to population growth, land fragmentation, and disputes between communities and government institutions continue to disrupt livelihoods and lead to land dispossession (National Emergency Coordination and Operations Centre [NECOC], 2023). Limited access to non-agricultural income opportunities further exacerbates poverty in the region (Mitooma District Local Government, 2023).

This study examines the effectiveness of leadership strategies in advancing sustainable household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Uganda. Identifying key leadership approaches and assessing their impact on poverty reduction initiatives will inform strategies that enhance household livelihoods. Strengthening leadership’s role in poverty alleviation is crucial for designing targeted interventions that address the specific needs of rural communities.

Findings from this study will offer valuable insights for policymakers, local leaders, and development organisations on the role of leadership in sustainable poverty eradication. Effective leadership approaches can drive economic empowerment and improve household living conditions. Additionally, this research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable development by emphasising leadership’s critical role in poverty reduction efforts in Uganda.

**Research question**

What leadership strategies can effectively support sustainable household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Uganda?

**Research hypothesis**

Leadership strategies have no significant effect on sustainable household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Uganda.

**2.1 Underpinning theory**

This study utilised Adaptive Leadership Theory, introduced by Heifetz and Linsky in 1994, as its guiding framework. The theory highlights leadership as a dynamic and evolving process that requires individuals to adjust to shifting environments and navigate complex challenges without clear-cut solutions (Heifetz & Linsky, 1994). Unlike conventional leadership models that depend on authority and technical expertise, adaptive leadership encourages leaders to mobilise communities, embrace uncertainty, and explore innovative approaches (Heifetz et al., 2009). This perspective is particularly relevant to addressing socio-economic issues such as poverty, as it enables leaders to foster community engagement, promote learning, and drive long-term transformation (Northouse, 2021).

Leadership strategies play a vital role in tackling poverty, particularly in rural settings like Rurehe Sub-County, Uganda, where socio-economic complexities demand innovative and adaptive responses. Adaptive Leadership Theory, as conceptualised by Heifetz and Linsky (1994), offers a useful lens for understanding how leadership strategies contribute to sustainable household poverty eradication. The theory underscores the importance of community engagement, addressing systemic issues, and implementing sustainable solutions through collaboration, learning, and adaptation (Heifetz et al., 2009).

A fundamental principle of Adaptive Leadership involves differentiating between technical and adaptive challenges. Poverty in Rurehe Sub-County extends beyond a technical issue requiring resource allocation; it represents an adaptive challenge that necessitates shifts in social behaviours, economic practices, and policy frameworks (Northouse, 2021). Effective leadership strategies must empower local communities to take an active role in their own development by fostering mindset transformations and capacity-building initiatives. Community leaders can implement participatory decision-making processes that encourage households to co-design sustainable agricultural methods and income-generating projects rather than relying solely on external assistance (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).

Another essential element of Adaptive Leadership involves mobilising individuals to experiment with new approaches and learn from setbacks. Sustainable household poverty eradication in Rurehe requires leadership that cultivates resilience and innovation, encouraging communities to test new economic models such as cooperative farming, microfinance initiatives, and vocational training programs without fear of failure (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). Leadership strategies that support adaptability enable households to navigate economic shifts effectively, fostering self-sufficiency and long-term financial stability.

Adaptive Leadership highlights the necessity of managing distress by ensuring that communities face challenges at a manageable pace while receiving adequate support throughout the transition (Heifetz et al., 2009). Poverty eradication initiatives in Rurehe should avoid overwhelming households with sudden policy changes or economic pressures, instead introducing gradual and sustainable interventions. Leaders can achieve this by implementing phased agricultural diversification initiatives or structured financial literacy training, allowing families to adapt progressively (Khan et al., 2020).

This leadership approach also underscores the value of distributed leadership, where solutions emerge from collective participation rather than centralised decision-making (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). Leadership strategies in Rurehe Sub-County should prioritise strengthening local leadership by equipping village leaders, women’s associations, and youth groups with the necessary skills to advance economic and social development. Strengthening decision-making at the community level fosters sustainable poverty eradication, shifting the approach from a dependency-based model to a self-reliant framework (Duit & Galaz, 2008).

Adaptive Leadership offers valuable insights into the role of leadership in advancing sustainable household poverty eradication efforts in Rurehe Sub-County. Addressing adaptive challenges, fostering innovation, maintaining manageable levels of distress, and encouraging shared leadership enables local leaders to drive meaningful socio-economic change. Effective implementation of these leadership strategies enhances the sustainability of poverty reduction initiatives, ensuring they remain community-led and adaptable to evolving economic circumstances.

**2.2Empirical review**

*Influence of leadership strategies on household poverty eradication*

A detailed review assessed various government initiatives aimed at alleviating household poverty in Uganda. Findings highlighted the significance of leadership in executing social safety nets, agricultural subsidies, and vocational training programmes. While these interventions demonstrated potential, corruption and mismanagement often limited their success, reinforcing the necessity of strong leadership to enhance implementation and ensure long-term sustainability (Kahara et al., 2023).

Research examining micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Makindye Division, Uganda, explored their contribution to poverty reduction. Findings revealed that youth and women operated the majority of MSMEs, highlighting the critical role of leadership within these groups in driving economic empowerment. Strengthening leadership capabilities among MSME operators was identified as a pathway to improving business performance and fostering poverty alleviation (Nabulya, 2021).

An additional study investigated the connection between human capital development and poverty reduction among parents in Uganda. Findings underscored the importance of leadership in advancing education, skills training, and health programmes, enabling parents to enhance their households' economic well-being. Strong leadership emerged as a fundamental element in mobilising resources and expanding opportunities for human capital development, ultimately supporting sustainable poverty reduction (Eze et al., 2023).

In North Jakarta, Indonesia, a quantitative study assessed the influence of leadership, motivation, and work culture on the effectiveness of poverty reduction programmes. Results indicated that leadership played a significant role, accounting for 14.1% of programme performance, while motivation and work culture contributed 36.5% and 0.9%, respectively. Collectively, these factors explained 50.4% of the programme’s success, demonstrating the vital role of effective leadership in advancing poverty alleviation efforts (Dwi, 2021).

Qualitative research in Vietnam evaluated existing poverty reduction strategies, stressing the necessity of strong leadership in improving the quality of life for disadvantaged populations. Findings highlighted the importance of addressing regional development imbalances and strengthening climate resilience measures. Leadership was identified as a key driver in implementing these strategies and ensuring sustainable poverty reduction outcomes (Nguyen, 2022).

A quantitative study in Pakistan examined the impact of educated leadership on poverty reduction. Findings indicated that promoting educated leaders is essential for lowering poverty levels, suggesting that government policies should focus on fostering knowledgeable leadership to implement effective poverty reduction initiatives (Khan & Ali, 2019).

Research in Latin America explored the effectiveness of poverty alleviation mechanisms within informal labour markets. Results emphasised the crucial role of leadership in designing and executing poverty reduction programmes, particularly in informal economies where conventional means-testing methods may be less effective (Galiani & Weinschelbaum, 2019).Bottom of Form

*Summary of key findings*

Government-led poverty alleviation initiatives in Uganda, including social safety nets, agricultural subsidies, and vocational training, have shown potential but are often undermined by corruption and mismanagement. Strengthening leadership is essential to enhance implementation and ensure long-term impact (Kahara et al., 2023).

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Makindye Division, Uganda, play a vital role in poverty reduction, particularly for youth and women. Enhancing leadership capacity within these groups fosters economic empowerment and improves business sustainability (Nabulya, 2021).

Human capital development, including education, skills training, and healthcare initiatives, significantly contributes to poverty reduction. Effective leadership is instrumental in mobilising resources and expanding opportunities, thereby improving household economic stability in Uganda (Eze et al., 2023).

A study in North Jakarta, Indonesia, revealed that leadership accounts for 14.1% of poverty reduction programme effectiveness, while motivation and work culture contribute an additional 36.3%, collectively explaining 50.4% of programme success (Dwi, 2021).

Research in Vietnam highlighted the critical role of leadership in addressing regional disparities and strengthening climate resilience. Effective leadership facilitates the implementation of sustainable poverty reduction strategies (Nguyen, 2022).

A study in Pakistan emphasised the link between educated leadership and poverty alleviation, suggesting that fostering knowledgeable leaders can enhance policy effectiveness and accelerate poverty reduction efforts (Khan & Ali, 2019).

In Latin America, leadership emerged as a key factor in designing and implementing poverty reduction initiatives within informal labour markets, where conventional means-testing approaches are often ineffective (Galiani & Weinschelbaum, 2019).

*Research gaps*

The study on leadership strategies for eradicating household poverty addresses multiple research gaps identified in the empirical review. One key gap explored is the influence of visionary leadership in fostering community engagement. Previous studies focused primarily on structural interventions such as financial resources, social safety nets, and vocational training (Kahara et al., 2023). The present research expands this understanding by demonstrating how leaders articulate a compelling vision that motivates both stakeholders and community members to participate actively in poverty eradication efforts. This perspective shifts leadership beyond policy implementation to include its role in inspiring and mobilising collective action.

Empowering individuals and communities to take ownership of the poverty eradication process represents another critical research gap addressed in this study. Earlier research examined leadership through the lenses of decision-making and programme implementation (Nabulya, 2021). The current findings highlight the significance of leaders fostering self-reliance among affected populations. Providing training, mentorship, and access to resources enhances community mobilisation and programme management, ensuring that poverty eradication efforts remain sustainable rather than externally dependent. This approach contributes to poverty reduction discussions by shifting attention from aid dependency to community-driven solutions.

Inclusive dialogue in policy-making for poverty eradication also emerges as a crucial area where this study contributes new insights. While existing literature acknowledges the importance of stakeholder collaboration, limited research has explored mechanisms that enable marginalised voices, including those living in poverty, to shape policies and programmes (Eze et al., 2023). Findings demonstrate that leaders establish platforms where the perspectives of marginalised groups are actively considered, ensuring that interventions align with local contexts and community needs. These insights strengthen the understanding of inclusive governance in poverty reduction strategies.

Leadership’s role in fostering partnerships has been primarily examined in relation to collaboration with organisations and government agencies (Kahara et al., 2023). This study extends that analysis by assessing how leaders cultivate cooperation at multiple levels, including grassroots organisations, non-profits, and private sector actors. Emphasising collaboration within communities, alongside institutional partnerships, ensures that poverty reduction strategies draw upon diverse expertise and resources.

Providing a comprehensive perspective on leadership strategies, this study integrates vision articulation, community empowerment, inclusive dialogue, and multi-level stakeholder cooperation. Addressing these research gaps contributes valuable insights into leadership’s role in driving sustainable household poverty eradication, particularly within the Ugandan context.

**3.0 Materials and methods**

*Location of the Study*

Rurehe Subcounty, situated in Mitooma District within Uganda's Western Region, is part of an agrarian society primarily engaged in coffee farming (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Mitooma District, established in 2010, consists of several subcounties, including Rurehe, where Robusta coffee production plays a crucial role in the local economy (International Coffee Organization, 2020). Agricultural potential in the subcounty remains high, yet infrastructural challenges continue to hinder economic progress. The absence of electricity restricts the utilisation of local mineral resources and stifles the growth of small-scale industries (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2020). Limited access to power not only slows industrial development but also affects the quality of education and healthcare services, creating further obstacles for residents (World Bank, 2019).

Efforts to reduce household poverty in Mitooma District have shown some progress. The poverty headcount stood at 12.8% in 2021, with a targeted reduction to 10.9% by 2024. Persistent poverty levels in Rurehe Subcounty remain a concern, with financial hardships contributing to social issues such as domestic violence. Local leaders have linked economic strains to increased cases of domestic disputes, particularly during periods of heightened household expenses (Boonafm, 2024). These conditions necessitated an inquiry into how leadership strategies influence efforts to eradicate household poverty in the region.

*Research design*

A survey research design was adopted to explore respondents' perspectives on the impact of leadership strategies on household poverty eradication. Structured questionnaires facilitated data collection, enabling a systematic and comprehensive analysis of participants' views. This method proved effective in gathering large-scale data, ensuring a representative understanding of the community’s experiences and perceptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Saunders et al., 2019).

A correlational research design was incorporated to assess the strength and nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This approach effectively measured the extent to which leadership strategies influenced household poverty eradication. Statistical analysis quantified these relationships, providing empirical insights into the effectiveness of leadership interventions in poverty reduction (Bryman, 2021; Hair et al., 2020). The integration of survey and correlational research designs ensured both descriptive and analytical depth, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

*Research approach*

A quantitative research approach provided a structured framework for systematically collecting and analysing numerical data related to the study variables. This method ensured an objective assessment of the relationship between change management strategies and household poverty eradication, enhancing the reliability and generalisability of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Saunders et al., 2019). Statistical analysis enabled hypothesis testing, revealing patterns, trends, and correlations within the data (Bryman, 2021). The selection of a quantitative approach proved effective in evaluating leadership strategies, offering empirical insights that could guide policy formulation and intervention strategies aimed at achieving sustainable poverty eradication (Hair et al., 2020).

*Target population*

Key stakeholders engaged in household poverty eradication efforts in Rurehe Sub-County, Mitooma District, formed the target population for this study. These included community development officers, village chairpersons, religious leaders, parish chiefs, the sub-county chief, the sub-county chairperson, and household heads, as detailed in Table 1. The selection of these categories was intentional, given their direct participation in community development initiatives and their capacity to provide valuable insights into how leadership strategies influence poverty eradication.

The inclusion criteria prioritised individuals with decision-making authority, leadership responsibilities, or direct experience in poverty eradication efforts, ensuring the data collected was both credible and relevant (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Household heads were included as key beneficiaries of poverty reduction initiatives, while local leaders and administrative officers were chosen for their role in policy implementation. Individuals without direct involvement in leadership or community development were excluded to maintain the study’s focus on participants with relevant expertise and experience.

A total of 242 individuals constituted the target population, distributed across the identified stakeholder categories in varying proportions. This selection approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the subject by incorporating perspectives from both policymakers and beneficiaries.

**Table 1**: Target Population

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Respondents/Category**  | **Target Population**  |
| Community development officer  |  1 |
| Sub County Chief |  1 |
| Sub County Chairperson |  1 |
| Parish chiefs  |  4 |
| Village chairpersons  |  20 |
| Religious Leaders  |  15 |
| Household heads |  200 |
| **Total**  |  **242** |

**Source**: Mitooma District Records (2024)

*Sampling techniques*

The researcher applied Yamane’s formula to determine a representative sample size, selecting 151 participants from a total target population of 242, as illustrated in Table 2.

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

Where:

n=Sample size

N= Target population

e=Margin of error

Therefore, $n=\frac{390}{(1+390(0.05)2)}$

$n=\frac{242}{(1+242(0.0025)}$

$n=\frac{242}{1+0.975}$

$n=\frac{242}{1.605}$ = 150.78

n= 151

The figure and presented in Table 2

**Table 2:** **Sample Size**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Respondents**  | **Target population**  | **Sample size**  |
| Community Development Officers |  1  |  1 |
| Sub County Chief |  1  |  1 |
| Sub- County Chairperson |  1  |  1 |
| Parish Chiefs  |  4  |  2 |
| Village Chairpersons  |  20  |  12 |
| Religious Leaders  |  15  |  9 |
| Household Heads  |  200  |  125 |
| **Total**  | **242**  |  151 |

**Source**: Researcher (2024)

A combination of stratified random sampling, proportionate sampling, and simple random sampling was utilised to ensure a representative selection from the target population of 242, resulting in a sample size of 151. Stratified random sampling grouped participants based on their roles, including household heads, village chairpersons, and religious leaders, ensuring adequate representation of key subgroups (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Proportionate sampling then allocated participants within each stratum according to their actual distribution in the population, preserving the accuracy of the sample composition (Taherdoost, 2021). Within each stratum, simple random sampling ensured that every individual had an equal opportunity for selection, minimising selection bias and enhancing the generalisability of the findings (Acharya et al., 2013). This multi-stage sampling approach strengthened the study’s validity by incorporating diverse perspectives while maintaining statistical precision.

*Research instruments*

A combination of researcher-administered and self-administered questionnaires facilitated effective data collection, considering variations in respondents' literacy levels. Researcher-administered questionnaires were utilised for participants with lower literacy levels, including household heads and some village chairpersons, to enhance response accuracy and minimise misunderstandings (Bryman, 2016). This method enabled clarification of questions, ensuring that respondents provided relevant information.

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to participants with higher literacy levels, such as sub-county officials, parish chiefs, and religious leaders, as their positions indicated the ability to comprehend and complete the questionnaire independently (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questionnaires incorporated closed-ended questions structured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, allowing for the collection of quantitative data aligned with the research approach. Likert scales are widely recognised in social research for their effectiveness in measuring attitudes, perceptions, and opinions while facilitating statistical analysis (Joshi et al., 2015). Using this mixed approach improved data quality while accommodating the literacy differences within the study population.

*Piloting*

A pilot study was conducted with 15 respondents, representing 10% of the sample size, who were excluded from the main study to eliminate response bias. This process assessed the validity and reliability of research instruments before full-scale data collection. Identifying ambiguities, unclear wording, and potential measurement errors during piloting allowed for necessary modifications, enhancing clarity and precision (Saunders et al., 2019). Refining the research instruments through this approach improved data accuracy and ensured that the tools effectively captured the required information, strengthening the study’s overall credibility.

Assessing the validity and reliability of research instruments ensured accuracy and consistency in data collection. Content validity and face validity determined the extent to which the questionnaire measured the intended constructs. Subject matter experts reviewed questionnaire items to confirm comprehensive coverage of all relevant study variables, ensuring content validity (Taherdoost, 2016). Pre-testing the instrument with a subset of respondents helped verify clarity and appropriateness, confirming face validity by ensuring questions were easily understood and relevant to the research objectives (Boateng et al., 2018).

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient measured reliability, yielding a value of 0.80, which exceeded the widely accepted 0.70 threshold (Taber, 2018). This result indicated a high level of internal consistency, demonstrating that questionnaire items reliably measured the same underlying construct. A Cronbach’s alpha above 0.70 is regarded as acceptable in social science research, signifying that the instrument produces stable and consistent results across repeated applications (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Establishing strong validity and reliability ensured that the study’s findings were credible and reproducible.

*Data analysis*

This study utilised both descriptive and inferential statistics to facilitate a comprehensive interpretation of findings. Descriptive statistics summarised the data by presenting measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, offering a clear overview of respondent characteristics and study variables (Field, 2018). Inferential statistics, including correlation and simple regression analysis, examined relationships between variables and evaluated the predictive effect of leadership strategies on sustainable household poverty eradication (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 0.05 significance level, ensuring a 95% confidence level, a standard threshold in social science research for minimising the probability of Type I errors (Pallant, 2020). Correlation analysis measured the strength and direction of relationships between variables, while simple regression analysis determined the extent to which leadership strategies influenced poverty eradication outcomes (Hair et al., 2020). Findings were presented through figures and tables to enhance clarity and facilitate interpretation. This structured analytical approach strengthened the rigour of data examination, improving the reliability and validity of the study.Bottom of Form

*Ethical considerations*

Ethical considerations played a crucial role in this study, ensuring adherence to established research guidelines while protecting participants' rights. Approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) was secured before data collection, confirming compliance with ethical standards and safeguarding human subjects from potential harm (Bryman, 2016). Ethical clearance remains essential in research involving human participants, as it ensures that the study framework aligns with both ethical and legal requirements (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Emphasis was placed on voluntary participation, with respondents providing informed consent before taking part in the study. Participants received detailed information regarding the study's objectives, potential risks, and anticipated benefits, while retaining the right to withdraw at any stage without repercussions (Saunders et al., 2019).

Confidentiality and anonymity were upheld to protect respondents' identities and personal information. Confidentiality was maintained through secure data storage and restricted access to authorised personnel only (Wiles, 2013). Anonymity was ensured by eliminating personal identifiers from data reporting, preventing responses from being linked to specific individuals (Neuman, 2014). These ethical measures fostered trust, encouraged openness in responses, and reinforced adherence to ethical research principles.

**4.0 Results and discussion**

*4.1 Response rate*

The survey attained a response rate of 82%, with 124 of 151 questionnaires returned as shown in Table 3. After a quality check, 123 responses were deemed valid for analysis, with only one excluded. This rate exceeds social science research standards, as Rogelberg and Stanton (2014) indicate that rates above 50% are adequate, while those exceeding 70% are excellent. The high response rate enhances the study’s credibility by minimising non-response bias, while the low exclusion rate (under 1%) suggests strong participant engagement and well-designed survey questions.

**Table 3:** **Response Rate**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  Response  | Frequency/Rate |
| Number of distributed Questionnaires | 151 |
| Returned Questionnaires | 124 |
| Returned and excluded questionnaires  |  1 |
| Retuned and usable questionnaires  | 123 |
| **Response rate**  | **82%** |

**Source:** Field Data, 2024

*4.2 Demographic profile*

The study examined respondents' gender, age, marital status, and educational background. Figure 1 to 4 present the frequency and percentage distribution of these demographic characteristics. Examining these demographic characteristics of respondent provides critical insights for assessing leadership strategies aimed at sustainable household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Uganda.

*Gender*

Gender was examined to understand disparities in economic participation and develop leadership strategies that promote inclusivity.



 **Figure 1:** Gender Profile

**Source:** Field Data, 2024

The gender distribution in the study on leadership strategies for household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Mitooma District, Uganda, indicates that males comprised 57% of respondents, while females accounted for 43%, as reflected in Figure 1. This pattern aligns with previous research on rural development programmes in Uganda, where male participation tends to be higher (Namukasa & Kiweewa, 2023). The gender disparity reflects persistent social structures influencing participation in poverty alleviation efforts, as noted by Semakula et al. (2022). However, the 43% female representation suggests increasing engagement, supporting Kyomuhendo's (2021) assertion that gender-sensitive strategies are gradually improving inclusivity. Similar trends were reported by Asiimwe et al. (2024) in rural South-Western Uganda, underscoring ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity in development initiatives.

*Age*

Age was analysed to design interventions that leverage the strengths and address the challenges of different age groups in poverty eradication.

**Figure 2:** Age Profile

**Source:** Field Data, 2024

The age distribution in the study on leadership strategies for household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Mitooma District, Uganda, reflects diverse participation across age groups as shown in Figure 2. Individuals over 50 years constituted the largest group at 33%, followed by those aged 35-49 years at 24%, while the 18-34 age group had the lowest representation at 3%. This pattern aligns with Tumwebaze and Okello (2023), who found that older individuals are more actively engaged in rural poverty alleviation programmes. The limited participation of younger adults supports Kwikiriza et al. (2022), who highlighted challenges in youth engagement in rural development initiatives. Nuwagaba and Mpairwe (2024) similarly reported that older adults are more involved due to factors like land ownership and established social networks. The low youth participation underscores concerns raised by Bahati (2021) about the need for targeted youth-inclusive strategies in poverty reduction efforts.

*Marital status*

The researcher included marital status to ensure that leadership strategies addressed the diverse needs of different household compositions (USAID, 2017).



**Figure 3:** Marital Status Profile

**Source:** Field Data, 2024

The marital status distribution in the study on leadership strategies for household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Mitooma District, Uganda, indicates that married individuals comprised the largest group at 32%, followed by divorced participants at 29%. This is shown in Figure 3. Widowed individuals accounted for 24%, while single participants represented 15%. This pattern aligns with Naturinda et al. (2023), who highlighted the significance of marital status in participation in rural poverty eradication programmes. The high proportion of divorced and widowed participants (53%) reflects findings by Kamukama and Byamukama (2022), who noted the heightened vulnerability of single-headed households in poverty settings. Similarly, Twebaze et al. (2024) found that divorced and widowed individuals often engage more in poverty reduction efforts due to increased economic pressures. The lower participation of single individuals supports Nakato’s (2021) observations on the influence of marital status on involvement in rural development initiatives, particularly in traditional communities.

*Level of education*

The researcher assessed respondents' educational backgrounds to identify skill gaps and develop training initiatives that equipped individuals with relevant competencies for economic advancement.



 **Figure 4:** Level of Education Profile

 **Source:** Field Data, 2024

The educational distribution chart from the study on leadership strategies for poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Mitooma District, Uganda provides an insightful overview of participants' educational backgrounds. The data reveals that informal education is the most prevalent, accounting for around 37%, followed by secondary school education at 26%, diploma holders at 15%, and primary school education at 11%. Smaller proportions of participants hold certificates (4%), bachelor's degrees (4%), and postgraduate qualifications (2%). This distribution is consistent with recent research by Turyahebwa et al. (2023), who found that informal education remains dominant in rural Uganda's development programmes. The significant representation of participants with informal education supports Namara and Byamugisha's (2022) findings regarding the barriers to educational access in rural areas. Kansiime et al. (2024) also observed similar trends in their study of rural poverty reduction initiatives, highlighting the inverse relationship between higher education levels and participation in such programmes. The low percentage of post-graduates and degree holder aligns with Atukunda's (2021) observations on brain drain in rural communities, where highly educated individuals tend to migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities.

*4.3 Descriptive statistical analysis on leadership strategies and household poverty eradication*

The study aimed to examine the connection between leadership strategies and household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Mitooma District, Uganda as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:** **Leadership Strategies and Household Poverty Eradication**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **N** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| The leaders have articulated compelling vision for household poverty eradication that inspires stakeholders and the community to actively engage in the change process. | 123 | 3.3984 | 1.01416 |
| The leaders have empowered individuals and communities affected by household poverty to be active participants in the change process | 123 | 3.2520 | 1.20514 |
| There leaders have fostered cooperation and partnership with other stakeholders involved in household poverty eradication efforts | 123 | 3.5366 | 1.24987 |
| Leaders have created platforms for inclusive dialogue, where the voices of marginalized groups, including those living in poverty, are heard and valued in shaping policies and programs that deal with household poverty eradication. | 123 | 3.8699 | 1.00783 |
| Leaders provide training, mentorship, and resources to enhance community mobilization and program management on household poverty eradication initiatives | 123 | 3.0163 | 1.35492 |
| Valid N (listwise) | **123** | **3.4146** | **1.16638** |

**Source:** Field Data, 2024

The study found the highest level of agreement on leaders creating platforms for inclusive dialogue (M=3.87, SD=1.01), ensuring that marginalized groups have a voice in shaping poverty eradication policies and programmes. The moderate standard deviation suggests consistent experiences with these platforms across the sub-county. This finding aligns with Ssebuufu et al. (2023), who highlighted the role of inclusive dialogue in improving rural poverty reduction outcomes. However, Njeri et al. (2023) noted that while such platforms exist, meaningful participation from marginalized groups remains a challenge.

Respondents also moderately agreed (M=3.54, SD=1.25) that leaders foster cooperation and partnerships in poverty eradication efforts. The higher standard deviation indicates varying experiences with these collaborations. Wasswa et al. (2023) emphasised leadership’s role in stakeholder engagement, while Odhiambo (2023) identified significant gaps in the effectiveness of partnerships, even when formal frameworks were in place.

Participants demonstrated moderate agreement (M=3.40, SD=1.01) on leaders effectively communicating a compelling vision for household poverty eradication. The standard deviation suggests some inconsistency in stakeholders’ perceptions of this vision. This finding aligns with Wangari et al. (2023), who reported that a well-defined vision increased stakeholder engagement by 35%. However, Mwangi et al. (2023) observed that many stakeholders struggled to connect with leadership’s vision, even when clearly communicated.

The lowest agreement level was recorded on community empowerment (M=3.25, SD=1.21), reflecting varied experiences regarding how leaders empower individuals and communities affected by poverty. The high standard deviation indicates inconsistencies in empowerment initiatives. Okello and Williams (2022) identified community empowerment as a vital but often unevenly implemented aspect of poverty reduction. Similarly, Kiprop et al. (2023) reported significant variations in empowerment outcomes across different regions.

The lowest level of agreement was observed regarding leadership’s provision of training and resources (M=3.02, SD=1.35), with the highest standard deviation in the dataset, indicating considerable variation in experiences with capacity-building support. This finding aligns with Kagame et al. (2023), who identified significant gaps in leadership support for community mobilisation and programme management. Similarly, Ndyamuhaki (2023) found that inadequate resource allocation and training support hindered programme effectiveness.

The aggregate mean (M=3.41, SD=1.17) suggests moderately positive but varied perceptions of leadership strategies. While inclusive dialogue platforms received positive feedback, areas such as training, resource provision, and community empowerment require improvement. These findings resonate with Ssewanyana (2024), who emphasised that leadership effectiveness in poverty reduction programmes necessitates a more comprehensive and consistent approach. Kamya (2024) similarly highlighted the need for stronger leadership support systems in rural poverty reduction initiatives.

*4.4 Statistical analysis of household poverty eradication*

The study aimed to examine respondents' perspectives on household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Mitooma District, Uganda, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:** **Household Poverty Eradication**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **N** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| The people have surplus food for consumption | 123 | 2.5528 | 1.14665 |
| People have descent shelter | 123 | 2.6016 | 1.23964 |
| People have access education | 123 | 3.0244 | 1.17671 |
| People have adequate sources of income | 123 | 3.2358 | 1.17405 |
| People are able to afford health facilities | 123 | 2.8374 | 1.25040 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 123 | **2.8504** | **1.19749** |

**Source:** Field Data, 2024

Respondents indicated moderate agreement (M = 3.24, SD = 1.17) regarding the adequacy of household income sources, though the high standard deviation reflects significant disparities in income levels within Rurehe Sub-County. This finding aligns with Mukasa et al. (2023), who reported substantial income variations among rural households in Uganda. However, Mutua et al. (2023) observed lower income adequacy in similar rural contexts, suggesting relatively better economic conditions in Rurehe.

Perceptions of educational access were also moderate (M = 3.02, SD = 1.18), with notable inconsistencies in opportunities across the community. These results support Nambuya et al. (2023), who emphasised education as a key factor in poverty reduction but noted uneven accessibility. In contrast, Odhiambo (2023) documented more severe educational access challenges in comparable rural areas, despite ongoing intervention efforts.

Affordability of healthcare facilities was rated moderately (M = 2.84, SD = 1.25), though the high standard deviation suggests significant disparities in access across households. These findings align with Wanjiru et al. (2023), who identified healthcare costs as a major barrier to poverty reduction in rural areas. Similarly, Ouma et al. (2023) reported persistent healthcare access gaps despite ongoing poverty alleviation efforts.

Satisfaction with housing conditions was relatively low (M = 2.60, SD = 1.24), indicating substantial variation in housing quality. These results are consistent with Okello and Williams (2023), who found inadequate housing to be a continuing challenge in rural poverty alleviation. Otieno et al. (2023b) similarly observed that many rural households still lack proper shelter despite targeted interventions.

Food security received the lowest rating (M = 2.55, SD = 1.15), reflecting widespread difficulties in maintaining sufficient food supplies. While some variation exists, the low mean underscores persistent food insecurity across Rurehe Sub-County. Byamugisha et al. (2023a) identified food security as a central concern in poverty reduction efforts, while Ndyamuhaki (2023) highlighted ongoing food access challenges in rural Uganda, even with agricultural development initiatives.

The composite mean (M = 2.85, SD = 1.20) indicates moderate to low effectiveness in poverty eradication efforts across Rurehe Sub-County. The consistent standard deviations suggest systemic inequalities in resource distribution and poverty reduction outcomes. These results highlight the need for targeted interventions, particularly in food security and housing, to address persistent disparities.

*4.5 Correlation Analysis*

The study conducted correlation analysis to examine the strength and direction of relationships between leadership strategies and household poverty eradication outcomes in Rurehe Sub-County. The correlation matrix in Table 6 is analysed using Evans' (1996) framework, which categorises correlation coefficients into five levels: very weak (0.00–0.19), weak (0.20–0.39), moderate (0.40–0.59), strong (0.60–0.79), and very strong (0.80–1.00). This classification provides a structured approach to interpreting the strength and direction of relationships between variables.

**Table 6:** **Correlation Matrix**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Leadership | Household Poverty Eradication |
| Leadership Strategies | Pearson Correlation | 1 | . |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  |  |
| N | 123 |  |
| House hold Poverty Eradication | Pearson Correlation | .280\*\* | 1 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .002 |  |
| N | 123 | 123 |

**Source:** Field Data, 2024

Using Evans' (1996) correlation coefficient framework, leadership strategies demonstrated a weak positive correlation with household poverty eradication (r = .280, p = .002), indicating a modest yet statistically significant association as shown in Table 6.

*4.6 Simple regression* *analysis*

The study employed simple linear regression analysis to evaluate the impact of leadership strategies on household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, Mitooma District, Uganda.

The study evaluated the model's goodness of fit using ANOVA, with the results presented in Table 7.

**Table 7:** **ANOVA on Leadership Strategies on Household Poverty Eradication**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model** | **Sum of Squares** | **Df** | **Mean Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
| 1 | Regression | 8.980 | 1 | 2.993 | 4.979 | .003b |
| Residual | 71.548 | 119 | .601 |  |  |
| Total | 80.527 | 120 |  |  |  |
| 1. Dependent Variable: Household Poverty Eradication; b. Predictor: (Constant), Leadership strategies

**Source**: Field Data (2024) |

The ANOVA results presented in Table 7 reveal that the F-test (F = 4.979, df = 1, 119; p = .003; p < 0.05) confirms that leadership strategies are statistically significant predictors of household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub County. The F-value of 4.979 with a p-value of .003 (which is below the 0.05 significance threshold) indicates that these strategies, when considered together, have a meaningful influence on poverty reduction outcomes. The total variance in the model is divided into 8.980 (regression) and 71.548 (residual), with 1 degree of freedom for the regression and 119 for the residual, resulting in mean squares of 2.993 and 0.601, respectively. This analysis shows that, although the explanatory power of the leadership strategies is relatively modest, their combined effect significantly contributes to the variation in household poverty eradication efforts in the sub-county.

**Table 8:** **Coefficientsfor leadership Strategies on Household Poverty Eradication**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model** | **Unstandardized Coefficients** | **Standardized Coefficients** | **T** | **Sig.** |
| **B** | **Std. Error** | **Beta** |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.160 | .515 |  | 2.251 | .026 |
| Leadership | .302 | .132 | .227 | 2.293 | .024 |
| 1. Dependent Variable: Household Poverty Eradication b. Predicator: leadership strategies

**Source**: Field Data (2024) |

The results indicate leadership strategies shows a significant positive effect on household poverty eradication (β = 0.227, t = 2.293, p = .024; p < 0.05). The B value of 0.302 (30.2%) indicates how much of household poverty eradication in Rurehe subcounty is explained by leadership strategies, holding other factors constant.

The model for this linear equation derived from these results is expressed as Y = 1.160 + 0.302X₁.

*Hypothesis testing*

The findings reveal that leadership strategies have a significant positive impact on household poverty eradication (β = 0.227, t = 2.293, p = .024; p < 0.05). The beta value of 0.302 (30.2%) suggests that leadership strategies account for a substantial proportion of household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County, assuming other factors remain constant. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

**Conclusion**

Leadership strategies have a meaningful yet limited impact on household poverty eradication in Rurehe Sub-County. Initiatives such as stakeholder partnerships and platforms for inclusive dialogue contribute to poverty reduction efforts, yet significant gaps persist in critical areas like training, resource allocation, and community empowerment. The weak positive correlation and regression outcomes suggest that leadership efforts alone cannot drive substantial poverty reduction, emphasising the necessity for broader, more targeted interventions. Strengthening access to healthcare, improving housing conditions, and addressing food security challenges remain essential for achieving long-term poverty

**Recommendations**

Enhancing the effectiveness of leadership strategies in household poverty eradication in Ruhehe Sub-County requires prioritising targeted interventions that address key gaps identified in the study. Strengthening leadership engagement through participatory governance mechanisms can ensure that the perspectives of marginalised groups are meaningfully incorporated into poverty reduction policies and programmes. Leaders should actively create dialogue platforms that encourage community involvement and decision-making in local development initiatives.

Expanding capacity-building efforts by increasing access to training and resources for households can significantly enhance economic resilience. Local governments, non-governmental organisations, and development agencies should collaborate to provide skill development programmes that equip communities with practical income-generating abilities. Allocating sufficient resources to agricultural development, small-scale enterprises, and vocational training can improve household livelihoods and foster sustainable economic growth.

Improving partnership effectiveness by fostering stronger collaboration among government agencies, private sector actors, and community-based organisations can enhance poverty eradication efforts. Establishing well-coordinated multi-sectoral frameworks can optimise resource utilisation and address key social and economic challenges more efficiently.

Prioritising investments in essential social services, including healthcare, education, and housing, can improve overall living conditions. Policymakers should implement targeted measures to make healthcare more affordable and accessible, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive adequate medical attention. Expanding educational opportunities through scholarship programmes and infrastructure development can help bridge disparities in access to quality education.

Addressing food security concerns through sustainable agricultural practices, modern farming techniques, and improved access to credit and markets for smallholder farmers can reduce food shortages. Strengthening food distribution systems and supporting community-based food security initiatives can enhance household nutrition and mitigate seasonal shortages.

Establishing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework can ensure that leadership strategies effectively contribute to poverty eradication. Conducting regular assessments and integrating feedback mechanisms will enable policymakers to identify gaps, measure progress, and make evidence-based adjustments to existing poverty reduction strategies.

**Limitations of the study**

Relying on self-reported data in this study introduces the possibility of response bias. Participants’ perceptions of leadership strategies and poverty eradication efforts may be shaped by personal experiences, expectations, or social desirability, potentially leading to an overestimation or underestimation of leadership effectiveness. This limitation impacts the objectivity of the findings, highlighting the need for complementary qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews, to validate responses and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Focusing exclusively on Rurehe Sub-County in Mitooma District limits the study’s applicability to broader contexts. Socio-economic conditions, leadership structures, and poverty dynamics vary across regions, reducing the generalisability of the findings to other areas. Conducting comparative studies across multiple regions in future research can enhance external validity and provide a more holistic perspective on the relationship between leadership strategies and poverty eradication

**Suggestion for further studies**

Given that leadership strategies account for only 30% of household poverty eradication, further research should examine additional factors that influence poverty reduction.

Examining the role of socio-economic and institutional factors in household poverty eradication would offer deeper insights into other critical determinants, including education levels, access to financial services, market structures, and institutional policies. Analysing how these elements interact with leadership strategies could strengthen the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts and inform more comprehensive interventions.

Investigating the impact of community-driven development approaches on household poverty reduction would provide valuable insights into the role of grassroots participation, social capital, and local governance structures in alleviating poverty. Assessing how community-led initiatives complement leadership strategies could contribute to a more integrated and sustainable approach to poverty eradication.

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