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**PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC  
POLICY MAKING: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED  
AREAS WITHIN THE LA-NKWANTANANG  
MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY, GHANA**

*by*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The perceptions of youth involvement in public policy making has been subject of discussion amongst various scholars around the globe. With youth confirming their displeasure in many ways (such as demonstrations and violent acts) about the failure of the community authorities in involving them in policies that affect their present and future life, this study sought to investigate their perceptions of involvement in policy making.

In addressing these concerns the youth involvement model and political system model as well as objectives such as examining the relationship, effect and significance between youth involvement and public policy making in three communities within the La-Nkwantanang municipal assembly (suburb of Accra Ghana) were included.

Using the regression model with a quantitative approach as well as a random sampling technique to administering an adapted structured questionnaire to 120 sampled youth, results indicated that factors of youth involvement positively relate to public policy making while views gathered indicated that youth-adult partnership factor relates more and should be a better approach to enhancing public policy making. Secondly results indicated that perceptions of youth involvement has a positive effect on public policy making. Lastly perceptions of youth involvement was significant to public policy making.

It was however recommended that synergizing youth involvement factors such as community readiness, youth-adult partnership, youth leadership and decision making as well as youth diversity will go along way to limit the challenges that comes with including the youth in public policy reforms.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

All over the world and with ages gone by, leaders (be it political, public or organizational) have consistently insisted that young people are the future of every facets of thoughts and ideologies in the world (UNDP, 2012). Though factual, are these comments just mere acknowledgement of young people within the society? Or there are actually actions that support these comments? Or are these comments and actions adequately felt by young people within the society? These concerns formed the basis for this study.

According to UNDP and IPU (2012) young people are most referred to as the youth. Meanwhile there are several definitions of youth as postulated by social institutions. For instance the International Initiative (2004) defined youth and young adult as “individuals from the ages of 16 through 24”. Also the global parliamentary report by UNDP and IPU (2012) stated that youth are persons between the ages of 16years and 35years. For the purposes of this study the later definition was adopted because it represented a large population of young persons while it presents an acceptable perceptual appeal of who a young person is.

In a survey conducted by UN IANYD in August, 2012 it was observed that an estimated 76% of 13000 respondents across 186 countries indicated that the greatest challenge for the youth were limited opportunities in effective decision making process. This inadequate participation in social issues of concern lives them marginalized hence they tend to find alternative sources for their voices to be heard. Such alternative sources may include various degrees of assault and vandalism on persons and properties. The survey indicated that though the youth formed an enormous pool of the world’s population (that is a fourth of the world’s population) they are barely given the

opportunity to participate in key decisions. Meanwhile various reports and surveys have been conducted to give a deeper observation to this view point held by the youth.

Whitlock and Hamilton (2001) report on youth participation in decision making showed some comments made by the youth when interviewed. The interviewee stated that “A process designed for youth without their perspective is fundamentally flawed and that youth add a language and legitimacy that appeals to other youth”. Also a report put together by Ansell and Colgues (2007) indicated that youth are unhappy about leaders or adults or parents making decisions for them without their opinion. Cairns (2001) of ‘Investing in Children organization’ stated that it was needless to marginalize the youth especially on matters that concern them since the best way is to see them as an equal of the adults, knowledgeable as the adults and who have contributions to make just as vital as the adults. Malmberg (1992) stated in the Netherlands that “making policies and solutions for youngsters without engaging them is spilling energy and money”.

These views expressed show a need for youth participation in policy making. Therefore this study investigated the perceptual involvement of youth in public policy making with a focus on few communities in Ghana. However according to Making (1997) involvement supersedes but includes engagement and participation of individuals in a social discourse. He stated that participation is where people take part in a social discourse whereas engagement is providing and disseminating an information or knowledge to a class of people. Alternatively Checkoway and Gutierrez (2006) defined involvement as an act of participating in something. In furtherance they stated that youth involvement encompasses a focus on civic engagement, youth rights and intergenerational equity.

Various scholars, social activist and politicians have been cited as making valuable contributions to youth involvement in policy making. Rozalis (a state attorney in Isreal) in 1998, for instance stated that “young people are residents like all others. Therefore their involvement is equal to that

of the grown up residents”. Also Hutchinson (2012), the Chair of International Initiative Board (UK), indicated that “It is no longer a question of whether we involve young people in matters that concern them but how we do it most effectively”. In defining the scope and framework within which perceptions of youth involvement was investigated in this study, the (Hart, 1997) ladder theory as well as youth involvement evaluation model (Coburn, Berggren-clive, Miller, Frerichs, Johnson, Johnson, Wilson, 2002), (Shier, 2001) pathways to participation, (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) social psychological model, (Ngai & Cheung, 1997) sequential specificity model and (McCurdy & Daro, 2001) model of involvement was considered. In measuring the factors that may influence the involvement levels of young people the involvement evaluation model identified such factors as community readiness, youth-adult partnership, youth leadership and diversity. This factors formed the framework for measuring level of youth involvement with a survey questionnaire.

Furthermore public policy making according to (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 1997), is a complex subject that can only be defined within the context of economic, social, political, organizational and religious structures of a nation. These structures that form the basis of public policy differ from country to country due to its contextual differences (Osman, 2010). From this end, it is clear that policies in advanced countries certainly differs from those in developing countries as those in developing countries are characterized by addressing issues such as unstable socio-economic and political structures.

Due to these unstable structures (Easton, 1965) postulated that public policies in developing countries (such as Ghana) deserve great attention. Unfortunately, many people in developing countries perceive public policy making as merely a technical function of government (Osman, 2010). Meanwhile, Hill (1993) defines a public policy as a complex interactive process that require

the attention of everyone including the youth. Therefore as a matter of measuring the perceptions of public policy making, the policy making steps by (Barnett & Brenan, 2006; Bloom, 2000; Martin, Pittman, Ferber & McMahon, 2007) as well as (Easton, 1965) policy system was used.

To respond to the needs and grievances of young people over the years and to guarantee that their basic human rights are recognized and enforced, the idea of youth involvement in public policy deliberations should not be overlooked. This reason is why this study was conducted to gather the perceptions of youth involvement in public policy making with a direct focus on a developing country such as Ghana (precisely Madina in the La-Nkwantanang Municipal Assembly) - an environment that hitherto enjoys inadequate contributions towards youth development. Madina (suburb of Accra) houses the Institute of Local Government and has an estimated population of 161,873 people (World Gazetteer, 2013). Due to inadequate financial resources and time, the study focused on three (3) communities within the assembly, namely, Estates, New-Road and Atomic junction.

Even though several studies have been conducted by (Rose-Krasnor, 2009; Urban, 2010; Warner, 2010, Sullivan & Larson, 2010; Richards- Schuster & Dobbie, 2011) on youth involvement/participation/engagement in policy making very few of these studies have investigated the perceptions of youth involvement in public policy making with a focus on developing countries. This gap in literature has necessitated the need to carry out this study and to enquire or investigate youth perceptions about their involvement in public policy making.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

According to a survey conducted by UNDP (2012) on “youth, governance and participation” it was conclusive that youth are a creative force and a major source of diverse innovation throughout history. As part of the survey, it was reported that sovereign nations in particular have a comprehensive program and initiative for the youth.

Meanwhile there is also an undeniable evidence that involvement of young people in public policy deliberations in formal and institutional political processes is relatively low when compared to the adults. This evidence questions the sovereignty claimed by these nations, as marginalizing the youth in policy making only leads to disenfranchisement of young people.

In a related development, the recent pouring of young individuals on the streets of Ghana heavily agitating for one action to be taken or another leaves a begging question in the minds of scholars and observers. Some wonder if individuals especially the youth who form a third of Ghana’s population are involved in policy making processes at various levels of policy making or are they being involved but their views or opinions not considered? These concerns is what has necessitated the need to undertake this research.

Adversely it was observed that very few if not none of the works have been done in this area of research with a special case of communities within the La-Nkwantanang municipality rendering this particular research subject an underexplored area.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**



The following represented the objectives for the study. They are general objectives and specific objectives.

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

-To investigate the perceptions of youth involvement in public policy making

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- To examine the relationship between youth involvement and public policy making

- To determine the effect of youth involvement on public policy making

- To determine the significance of youth involvement on public policy making

- To determine which youth involvement factor(s) highly influences public policy making

### **1.4 Research hypothesis**

The following hypotheses were tested to reveal the perceptions of youth involvement in public policy making

H<sub>0</sub>: Youth involvement has no relationship with public policy making

H<sub>A</sub>: Youth involvement has a relationship with public policy making

H<sub>1</sub>: Youth involvement has no effect on public policy making

H<sub>A1</sub>: Youth involvement has an effect on public policy making

H<sub>2</sub>: Youth involvement is not significant to public policy making

H<sub>A2</sub>: Youth involvement is significant to public policy making

H<sub>3</sub>: Some youth involvement factor(s) influences public policy making

H<sub>A3</sub>: No youth involvement factor highly influences public policy making

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

One importance of the current study is that it provides reliable information and educate the youth about public policy decisions.

This study also provides information to the stakeholders in policy making to widen their scope to include the target population for which they are making the policy for.

The study also serves as an empirical evidence and serves as a benchmark on which related researches can be conducted.

The study enhances decision-makers' scope concerning the current literature and to implement standardized criteria when involving youth in public policy making.

### **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The organization of this study was captured under five chapters. Chapter one comprises the introduction which is sub-divided into the background, statement of the problem, research hypothesis, objectives of the study significance of the study and the organization of the study.

The second chapter comprised of the literature review which consisted of related theoretical literature, empirical literature and operational definitions and constructs.

Chapter three discussed the methodology used for this research. It comprised the research design, the target population of the study, the sample size, the sampling techniques, the data collection instrument, and the statistical tools which was used in the data analysis.

Chapter four presented the findings and discussions of the study. Chapter five presented conclusion that was drawn from the findings, recommendations to the research limitations and shortfalls and limitations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The literature review consists of theoretical, empirical literature and operational definition and construct. Theoretical literature reviewed relevant theories and concept of the variables that were used in the study.

Involvement concepts and models such as the Hart's Ladder, Shier's Pathways to Participation, Youth Involvement Evaluation model, Social Psychological model, Sequential Specificity model and McCardy and Daro model of involvement. Also the concept of public policy making and the policy making steps by (Barnett & Brennan, 2006; Bloom, 2000; Martin, Pittman, Ferber & McMahon, 2007) as well as (Easton, 1965) policy system was discussed.

Empirical literature, on the other hand reviewed articles by scholars that relate to the study. Operational definition and construct gave a specific description of a youth that was used as the target population in the study.

#### **2.1.0 Theoretical literature**

##### **2.1.1 Theoretical review of Involvement models**

###### **2.1.1.1 Hart's Ladder (1997) and Shier's Pathway to Participation**

Hart (1997) and Shier (2001) models of participation are synonymous in various spectrums. Hart posits that the involvement of youth in policy processes should be executed steadily in an upward to downward way just like a "ladder". According to Hart the inclusion of the youth at the last three rungs of involvement exhibits the limitations to youth voice and active participation in the policy process. On the other hand, the top rung (8<sup>th</sup> rung) is described by Hart as an incredibly intensive involvement of the youth in policy making. He described this rung as a true recognition of the rights of individuals and the avoidance of disenfranchising them. In brief the Hart's ladder of eight rungs is displayed below in a descending order.

8. Young people and adults share decision making
7. Young people lead and initiate action
6. Adult initiated, shared decision with youth
5. Young people are consulted and informed
4. Young people are assigned and informed
3. Young people are tokenized
2. Young people are decoration
1. Young people are manipulated

Further support is given to Hart's model of involvement in policy making by (Shier, 2001). Shier (2001) also posits a five level pathway towards youth involvement in policy making. He recognizes youth participation not as a one-off-event but a continuity of several process. The focus of this model is to assess or evaluate community readiness by involving the youth in policy making. Therefore each stage of evaluation possess sets of questions to determine the level of youth involvement in that ecosystem. He admonishes that level one is the initiation stage of youth involvement practices while level three is the minimum practice needed to meet the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Levels four and five are described as exceeding the expectations of UNCRC and deepens the sovereignty of states or communities. The following are the levels of youth participation in policy marking as identified by Shier in a descending order.

Level 5: youth share power and responsibility in decision making

This level addresses issues such as community readiness to share some adult power with the youth. It also questions the procedure that enables young people and adults share power and responsibility. Lastly this level questions whether the community has a policy requirement that enables the youth and adults share power and responsibility.

Level 4: young people are involved in decision making processes

This level evaluates the community's openness to allow youth join in the decision process. It also queries the availability of a procedure that enable young people join decision making process. Lastly it enquires whether there is a policy requirement for young people to be involved in decision making process.

Level 3: young people's view are taken into account

This level enquires the community's readiness to take young people's views into account, whether the procedure in policy making process allows the consideration of youth contributions and whether it is a policy requirement to or not to give weight to the youth views.

Level 2: young people are supported in expressing their views

This stage investigates community's indulgence to support young people in expressing their views. This stage affirms whether communities have a range of ideas and activities to help youth express themselves as well as assessing whether the policy requires that young people should be assisted in expressing their views.

Level 1: young people are listened to

This represents the beginning of involving the youth in policy making. The community should ensure that young people are listened to. This stage also addresses the enabling environment to heed to young people's views. Lastly this level questions whether it is a policy requirement that young people should be listened to.

In conclusion the Hart and Shier model explains in systematic way, the importance of committee or community level of involving the youth in public policy making. Even though the two models give a breakdown of how policy should involve the youth it did so only on the community level oblivious of the fact that other factors aside committee, process and policies might hinder the involvement of youth. Therefore this model is thought out to be too microscopic to the involvement processes that rolls on the ground. Factors such as culture diversity, youth-adult relationship and attitude of individuals are important areas that these models ignored.

#### **2.1.1.2 The Social Psychological Model**

This model provides a general overview of encouraging involvement as a policy making process (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It evaluates the individual's cognitive abilities and specifies the thought patterns that lead to decisive actions. This model has been linked to youth behaviour as an application of beliefs, attitudes and intentions to the decision making process (Grotelueschen & Caulley, 1997; Chell, 1985; McCurdy & Daro, 2001).

The social psychological model examines youth decision making process about participation in policy making. To this end, youth belief about a youth activity program is weighed and derived from the experiences that the youth is faced with. From the belief stage, youth are presumed to form attitudes towards the involvement program. According to Fishbein and Ajzen an attitude is

an affective (feeling) exercise of ones behaviour. An attitude suffices from a belief system after several observation of youth behaviour within the involvement program. Based on the attitude toward the program an intention of participation is formed. The more positive attributes the youth finds in his evaluation process of the involvement program, the more he is attached and committed strongly towards that course. However strongly the intentions are towards the program, the youth is also concerned about how peers and or parents accept his/her intentions. Therefore it is certain that though young people may choose to be part of a policy process external factors may impede or aid their decisions.

In conclusion this model provides an in depth analysis of the psychological battle the youth goes through before making a decision to be involved in a policy program. Though it thrives well at areas where the Shier and Hart model failed, it also fails to emphasize some external factors that may hinder or propel the youth toward involvement in policy making.

### **2.1.1.3 McCurdy and Daro Model**

The concept of McCurdy and Daro (2001) is deeply rooted in the Fishbein and Ajzen model. Though this model is not conventionally a youth model, it provides a generic means of evaluating individual participation in policy making. This concept provides a thorough breakdown of three (3) sequential paths of youth involvement. First it builds on Fishbein and Ajzen model of intentions, discusses the phenomenon of participation- that is whether a face to face contact is made towards the policy program and third it explores whether participation is maintained. Meanwhile the three (3) sequential paths do not work in isolation, they are influenced by four environmental factors, namely, the neighborhood/community, individual decision- maker, the policy making entity and the program activity itself. Foremost the community within which the participation occurs influences to a large extent the intent of the participant. In places where youth

are marginalized, trust is low and social cohesion is minimal, participation of youth in policy will shrink, all other things being equal. More so, the participation of the individual in the decision making process are characterized by the individual's attitude toward the program, level of need and readiness to change which may influence the intentions to participate. Meanwhile individual features do not act in isolation, they are catalyzed by factors as respect and acceptance of individual differences. In synonymy, with the Fishbein and Ajzen model it reiterates the sequential processes that emphasizes an ardent partaker to decision making process, to irregular participation in policy programs due to environmental factors.

Though the McCurdy and Daro model provides a generic understanding of participation of adults, it fails to acknowledge the youth participation in policy making. This shortfall marginalizes youth involvement in policy making and draws back the argument that youth are the future hence should be given the necessary platform. The model is thought out as very myopic and not futuristic as it emphasizes on adults' participation.

#### **2.1.1.4 The Sequential Specificity model**

This model was developed by Ngai and Cheung in 1997 after a study was conducted about participation among adolescents in youth centers in Hong Kong. This model however resulted from (Smith, 1980) "social and recreational participation" and (Goel, 1980) "political participation model". The basic call of the sequential model is that decisions gradually change considerably as the youth get more and more involved with the policy process (Ngai & Cheung, 1997). Meanwhile the sequential specificity model categorized potential and existing youth participants into three, namely, the non-participant non-goers, non-participant goers and the program participants.



The non-participant non-goers are considered as youths who have not involved themselves with youth involvement programs and or joined any youth movement. These individuals generally participate when the need be to assess information within the environment. They usually are uncertain about their involvement decisions. However the non-participant-goers are readily aware of a youth involvement policy but may not find it attractive engaging in it. They may also attend policy initiatives but once they get used to environment the main aim of contributing towards policy formulation is misplaced amongst other ideas. Lastly the program participants have a high stake in policy making and have in-depth knowledge and information on the essence of involvement. Ngai and Cheung postulated that the degree of involvement of this group of youth should warrant them the opportunity of leadership roles and playing a major part in policy making activities.

According to Ngai and Cheung this model is a better predictor of youth involvement in policy making since it includes attitude formation as opposed to the intentions of the youth. The specificity model is a better way of assessing youth involvement in policy procedures because it is particular to youth attitudes towards grass root policy participations. The model is also useful and gives hope to the youth as opposed to McCurdy and Daro model. This is because it posits that as a youth increasingly participate in policy making decisions may considerably deepen to favor the youth. However the model fails to endorse what feature or individual background is required of a youth to influence policy making to its favor. It also fails to provide contingency factors that youth should fall on when decisions do not turn in their favor after long periods of involvement.

### **2.1.1.5 The Youth Engagement Evaluation model**

This evaluation model formed the pivot of assessing youth involvement in this study because it is an evaluation model intended to rate the performance of the community, individual (youth) and other factors during the policy process (Coburn, et al 2002). This model was also used as a point of measurement because it addresses the shortfalls of the previous models discussed in this session and also includes other factors in policy making process. Four thematic areas was adapted in this study as opposed to the original framework developed by (Coburn, et al 2002). These areas are however discussed below.

#### **Community Readiness**

The readiness of the community about youth involvement in policy making is a crucial starting point for involvement practices. This aspect of the model converts the theoretical mode of investment to an empirical mode. It answers the question, “how ready is the community to involve the youth in policy making?” and whether youth contributions are valued as well as whether youth are considered active or passive participants. This aspect of the model suggests that structures or processes should be readily available for youth to participate on a regular basis. Another commitment towards community readiness for youth involvement includes budget allocations for youth activities. . Meanwhile Coburn, et al (2002) posits that funding is not an exclusive way of sustaining the initiative but helping the youth to develop an ethical balance towards youth involvement practices is. Without these commitments youth involvement programs will be a passive structure. Sustaining and including ethics in youth involvement programs is an important aspect of this thematic area. The ethical part recognizes that youth expect their actions or contribution to have noticeable difference in the policy process.

### **Youth-Adult Partnership**

There is a true partnership when youth and adults chose to voluntarily work together according to respective rights and responsibilities. This partnership requires that both groups have unique but interdependent skills, knowledge and experiences which aid the advancement of a common goal. In achieving this, it posits that adults should provide a mentor-driven program to sharpen the skills and knowledge of young individuals. Adult commitment toward youth collaboration is a road map for sustainable development. By doing this adults need to voluntarily share their experiences and opinions with youth to aid better decision process. It is posited that both youth and adult enjoy benefit from strong and cordial relationships with each other. This cordial phase is then carried into a new phase of participation in decision formulation where knowledge and experiences are shared and skills are sharpened in certain perspectives. This is further enhanced by encouraging and celebrating youth contribution toward policy formulation. In grooming this relationship youth are always likely to provide volunteering services when it matters most.

### **Youth Leadership and Decision Making**

This aspect of the model requires an exposure of young people to new ideas, assessment of new techniques according to the developmental capability of the youth. It posits that effective leadership is sustained through a process of involving youth in policy making. Committing useful resources such as time, training and coaching young people can develop their leadership potentials and decision making process. With this idea in mind, young people are groomed and made aware about their responsibility as leaders, making prudent decisions, gathering information, identifying alternatives including constraints, considering outcomes and opting for the best possible solution. As a precautionary measure young people should be introduced and or involved in policy making and leadership procedures in a careful and steady manner as failures in the life of the youth may

hinder future participation in leading policy procedures. This steady move is to initiate young people as observers and taking the time to decide what style of leadership they want to assume.

### **Diversity**

This phase of the model posits that individuals have different perspectives to life which are reflected in the way they behave. Though the youth are aware of their differences in age, education, race, ethnicity, finances, occupation and mental abilities, they are also aware of the similarities that bond them together. Therefore it is imperative to remove and or acknowledge the differences and propel the youth towards policy participation. It is vital to involve minority youth groups during the process so as to formulate a unanimous voice in the policy structure. Failure on the part of the community to do this will break future successes of chains of programs. The important point here is including and respecting divergent views as more representative than accepting a group's view as the collective view.

#### **2.1.2 Theoretical review of Public Policy Making**

According to Osman (2010) policy is a complex term that emphasizes the aspiration of future goals and objectives and maps out a step by step guideline in achieving such goals and objectives. Hill (1993) defines policy as “the product of political influence, determining and setting limits to what the state does”. According to Anderson (1975) the decision that government takes to achieve a set target within a social context is referred to as *public policy*. Ardent sociologist opine that public policy should be considered as a gamut of complex processes involving individuals (Jenkins, 1978; Rose, 1976; Anderson, 1978). This is due to the fact that policy decisions are not intended to be confined in its implementations but a changing process that influences the life of individuals within the society (Gilliat, 1984).

Rose (1969) described policy making as a network of varying processes other than a one-off activity. As varying as the process is, so is the opinions/views of the policy deliberation process. The process involves negotiations, bargaining, accommodations which is later effected through a political impression/enforcement. Based on this processes, it is certain that public policy processes are dynamic and complex in nature and provides equal platforms for different interests and opinions of a target group. In this stead it is necessary to note that public policy deliberations do not only involve public officials and institutions but gathers views from private individuals as well. Therefore the public private interaction exhibits a political touch within which the policy makers influence by soliciting the support for a specific interest or view. The structure of the policy system in developing countries differ from advanced countries, hence theories such as the rational, incremental, group theory, scanning model and the elite theory were all made on the foundation of the advanced systems therefore it will be inadequate to adopt them in analyzing policy processes in this study. Meanwhile the political system model developed by Easton in 1965 explains the policy making process in developing countries and communities.

#### **2.1.2.1 Political System Model**

This model was developed by Easton in 1965. It is popularly opined by various researchers that this model is best fit for addressing public policy processes within developing countries. According to Easton (1965) the inter complexity of interests/views of different companies and the allocation of values set to bind on society is referred to as the political system model. He argued out that policy making becomes important because of vital actors within the environment. The actors within the environment that form part of the policy process are politically influenced by pressure groups, consumer groups and interest groups. The politically influenced structures are transformed through the political systems into outputs/policies. Countries such as the United States do not

follow the laid down processes of policy making as identified by Easton. The presence of irregular feedback loops characterized by developing communities is recognized by this model. The model also posits that policies within the developing countries are less responsive to the demands of the environment. In furtherance the model posits that individuals within the developing environment have less involvement and influence on policy making. Walt (1994) posits that developing countries are characterized by the retaining of governments with unpopular supports therefore the implementation of set policies are unlikely to succeed. Therefore public policies within these should be held in context of their political environment and structure (Easton, 1965). Though Easton's model is applicable to developing countries in policy making it lacks specific and direct measure of public policy making. In specifics, Bernette and Brennan (2006) and Bloom (2000) suggested that public policies should be centered on the following areas;

✓ **Provide and expand youth opportunities to become long-term contributors to school and community development**

Policies should provide and promote some window of opportunity to involve youth and enable them participate more in decision making, planning, problem solving, evaluation and taking action. For a policy provision a unique attention must be given to the youth to enable continuity and sustainable development of the human resource.

✓ **Be inclusive – reach out to all youth**

According to Bloom (2000) being inclusive means recognizing differences and merging these differences. Differences such as socio-economic status, age, lifestyle, religion and gender should be involved to eliminate the diversity. It posits that consideration should be given to marginalized groups of people such as under-represented group (Fernandes & Gabe, 2009). According to this aspect all-inclusiveness bring about a coherent solution other than a divergent one.

- ✓ **Develop the capacity of youth to participate and lead effectively and the capacity of adults to work with them in supportive ways**

This aspect suggests that policies made for the youth should engage or point out ways of building the youth's capacity towards development. This capacity should focus on building the mind, skills, attitudes required for working together. The policy should influence adults in wanting to help youth reach a certain height. The policy should acknowledge that mentoring should be mutual and that both youth and adult have a lot to learn from each other. When this is done, it will ensure opportunities for personal growth, skill enhancement and leadership.

- ✓ **Engage youth actively in providing new ideas that stimulate enthusiasm and investment in strengthening communities, families, schools, and young people**

This posits that policies should actively facilitate youth input and prioritizing the ideas and contribution of young people. The youth however bring peculiar perspectives that need to be respected and supported by all.

- ✓ **Design the working environment to ensure equity and safety for young participants; pay special attention to the distribution of power between young people and adults**

The policy design should establish leadership portfolios for both adult and youth without bias. Remunerations or benefits allocated to the adults should as well be allocated to the youth to avoid unequivocal situations.

- ✓ **Through collaborative mechanisms integrate and weave together the resources of schools, homes, and communities to support meaningful youth participation and a wide-range of networking for accomplishing the group's mission**

Resources should be made available to offset the costs of youth involvement in policy making.

- ✓ **Link youth to comprehensive planning and policy efforts**

The formulation of a public policy for the youth should provide an alternative or opportunity for the youth to identify their own interest within the context of the policy formulation. It posits that

youth should be involved in programs that challenges their mental capabilities as a major step to contributing to policy programs.

- ✓ **Self-reflect, evaluate, and celebrate the group’s accomplishments in ways that recognize differences in perspective and contribution**

The policy formulated should entreat and encourage youth to learn from experiences to build key capacities. This can be achieved through structured reflection and debriefing as well as formative evaluation. The policy should provide enough platform for youth rewards and appreciations in policy making.

## **2.2.0 Empirical literature**

### **2.2.1 Empirical review of “Youth Voice: Developing Future Leaders”**

This study was conducted by Bading, Anderson and Sandmann (2009) to examine youths’ perceptions of their involvement of Youth Advisory Boards in Cooperative Extension. The study adopted stratified, random sampling technique of communities with an active youth advisory boards which were selected from all districts across the United States. The administration of questionnaires was done through electronic mails to all participants. An involvement and rated interaction scale was used as well. Analysis were made and findings indicated that youth feel good about their level of participation in the advisory board. The results indicated that adult members on the board allow the youth to have an active voice in board proceedings.

### **2.2.2 Empirical review of “Engagement mentoring for disaffected youth: A new model of mentoring for social inclusion”**

This study was conducted by Colley (2003) with a focus on analyzing mentoring for social inclusion. The issue of youth engagement is often treated in this article as a tool for education policies in the 1990’s. The objective of the study was to engage the youth through an adult



mentoring program. The study achieved this objective by applying the feminist readings of Bourdieu and Marx within the socio-economic context. The article concludes that engagement mentoring constructs of both mentor and mentee (youth) was crucial to the social inclusion of youth. Colley's findings was synonymous to the youth voice study conducted by Bading, Anderson and Sandmann in 2009 though both studies were conducted in different times.

### **2.2.3 Empirical review of “Can Adults accept youth as equal partners in communities?”**

This study was conducted by Flage (2010) in New Jersey. According to him communities benefit from individuals as well as the youth. Meanwhile adults perceive youth as illegitimate contributors to community decision-making processes. The objective of the study was to assess adults' perception of participating with youth in a community program. The study analyzed whether attitudes, opinions and behaviours of adults changed towards young people while working on a project with them. Results of the study indicated that there was a positive change in adult attitudes, opinions and behaviours.

### **2.2.4 Empirical review of “Predictors of adolescent successful development after an exchange: The importance of activity qualities and youth input”.**

This study was conducted by Lawford in 2012. The purpose of the study was to examine the factors involved in predicting successful development after an intensive exchange experience in adolescence. These features were conceptualized by the model propounded by (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The study also assessed the amount of involvement expended by the youth on the intensive exchange experience program. Meanwhile a short term longitudinal study of 240 adolescents of varying ages completed the survey before and after the completion of the program. The results indicated that the features and personal inputs of the adolescents significantly related to overall successful development.

### **2.2.5 Empirical review of “Breaking down potential barriers to continued program participation”**

This study was conducted by Serido (2011) in Toronto, Canada. Though participation of youth was essential to developmental outcomes, recruitment and retention of youth in programs comes with a lot of challenges. The focus of the study was to assess the elements of positive youth programming especially youth voice and supportive relationships. The results of the study indicated that supportive relationships given by the youth reduces barriers to participation. Also the results indicated that youth voice increased potential barriers to participation for ethnic minority youth but not for white youth.

### **2.2.6 Empirical review of “Youth people’s perspectives on creating a participation-friendly culture”**

This study was conducted by Subramaniam and Mancola (2010). They opined that youth-serving organizations work in tandem with the youth and consider them as partners of relevant issues concerning young people. The purpose of the study was to give more insight and to coach the youth on participation within the organizational setting. With an interview- oriented qualitative research approach 31 young persons and 7 adults from six different development programs in California who are involved in leadership and decision-making roles participated in the research. The results indicated that organizations need to involve peer processes into their change strategies and discuss the role of youth- adult relationship in the program.

### **2.2.7 Empirical review of “The role of intentional self-regulation lower neighborhood ecological assets and activity involvement in youth developmental outcomes”**

The study was conducted by Urban (2010) in the United States of America. The purpose of the study was to explore whether intentional self-regulation ability or participation of youth in extracurricular affairs affects their positive youth development in neighborhoods with relatively

low ecological assets. About 545 youth participated in the study with 50.3% of them being female. The data was also gathered from across various ethnicities within America such as European Americans, Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans. The results indicated that youth with greatest intentional self-regulation ability participate more in extracurricular affairs and that affects their developmental attitudes positively.

### **2.2.8 Empirical review of “Preventing youth violence through the promotion of community engagement and membership”**

According to Zeldin (2004) youth policy in United States is perceived as policy made for individuals who need protection and control from their communities. This perception makes adult overlook the importance of the youth within the society and this in turn hurts the youth hence engaging in acts of violence. The purpose of Zeldin’s study was to explore youth engagement in community decision making as a public response to violence. It was concluded from a quantitative survey that youth engagement in policy or decision making reduces the likelihood of inter personal violence and delinquency while it also helps in promoting community belongingness and enhancement of youth capabilities in policy making.

### **2.2.9 Empirical review of “The psychology and practice of youth-adult partnership: Bridging generations for youth development and community change”**

According to Zeldin (2012) youth –adult partnership (Y-AP) has become an ideology of great interest to scholars. He however opined that youth-adult partnership (Y-AP) is most likely to increase development of youth through participation, the practice remains unfamiliar in many territories around the world. The purpose of the study was to provide sufficient construct in developmental theory and community practice. After a thematic content analysis was used it was realized that Y-AP is a unifying concept distinct from other youth-adult relationship concepts. It

was also concluded that Y-AP should be seen as an active ingredient and fundamental practice for positive youth development and civic engagement.

### **2.3.0 Empirical review of “Balancing the equation: Communities supporting youth and youth supporting communities”.**

Pittman (2000) in meeting the objectives of this study reflected on 40 years of changes in approaches to working with and for marginalized young people. He recognizes that a lot of progress have been made within this period. He finally concluded that young people must become active in sharing and exercising power if visions are to be achieved.

### **2.4 Operational Definition and Construct of ‘Youth’**

For the purposes of this study the definition of UNDP and IPU (2012) was adopted. Therefore individuals between the ages of 16years and 35years and who have attained a minimum of junior high school certification are considered as the youth in this study. The term ‘youth’ is almost often replaced by the term ‘young people/individual’ in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter examined the research design, data collection, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, study instruments, and the analytical tools and techniques to be used in the study.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

According to (Kerlinger, 1986) a research design is a plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions. The study was conducted using the quantitative approach to research. According to (Burns & Grove, 2005) quantitative research design is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world. Quantitative approach was used because the study tested hypothesis inferentially. The study adopted correlational research design. According to (Porter & Carter, 2000, pp. 17-28) “correlational research aims to systematically investigate and explain the nature of the relationship between variables in the real world”. Correlational research was used because the study investigated the influence of youth involvement in public policy making. The study also adopted the cross-sectional research design. Malhorta, Hall, and Shaw (2007) defined cross-sectional design as a type of research design involving the collection of information from a given sample of population elements only once”. This was used because data was gathered from the target respondents only once.

### **3.2 Target Population**

Kothari (2004) defines population as the total of items for which the information is desired. The population considered in this study comprised of young persons (youth) between the ages of 16years and 35years in three communities within the La-Nkwantanang municipal assembly. The communities include Madina-New road, Estates and Atomic junction.

### **3.3 Sample size**

According to (McNeese-Smith, 1999) sample size is “the number of observations used for calculating estimates of a given population”. The sample size was computed using the (Nasiurma, 2000) formula. This formulae provides only the minimum number required for data collection. It is however at the discretion of the researcher to either maintain the minimum figure or go beyond it during data collection so as to make the sample frame more representative.

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N - 1)e^2} = \frac{(161873)(0.5)^2}{0.5^2 + (161873 - 1)0.05^2} = 99.94$$

Where **n** is the sample size, **N** is the population, **C** is the coefficient of variation (0.5), **e** is the level of precision (0.05) (Nasiurma, 2000). The total individuals within the La-Nkwantanang municipal assembly is 161,873 as at 2013. Therefore by the Nasiurma formulae the minimum data to be collected is 99.94. As stated earlier the researcher could only increase the number of observations or maintain it, therefore the researcher collected data from more than 99.94 respondents (that is 120 to be precise). Therefore the sample size that was used for this research was (120) one hundred and fifty young persons. This is because one hundred and fifty (120) young individuals is a good representation of the entire population of youth across the three communities (New road, Estates and Atomic junction).

### **3.4 Data Sources**

The research made use of both secondary source and primary source of data. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2002) describe secondary data as information collected by others that is distinct to their own purpose other than the researcher's intent. Secondary data was gathered from relevant reading materials from the internet, journal of sociology and articles relevant to the study, relevant books on issues relating to youth involvement and policy making. Secondary data increases the reliability and validity of the study.

Reitz and Wing (2008, p. 153) defines primary data as "observations that can be replicated by subsequent investigators such as element representation and taxonomic identification". Primary data was collected from our target population using questionnaires designed to solicit the necessary information needed for the research.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

United States Bureau of the Census, Software and Standards Management Branch, Support Division (1998) defines sampling technique as the name or other identification of the specific process by which the entities of the sample have been selected.

The research used non-probability sampling method in selecting respondents for the study. Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique where a sample are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In selecting the sample size purposive sampling was used. Patton (1990) defined purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of some characteristics. The researcher used purposive sampling technique because the target population was specifically young individuals (16-35years) in three communities within Lankwantanang municipality. Also the research used convenience sampling technique in selecting the target respondents. Saumure and Given (2008) defined convenience sampling as a sample in

which research participants are selected based on their ease of availability. This was used because the researcher wanted respondents who are available to participate in the study and who will provide the required information.

### **3.6 Study Instruments**

According to (Pierce, 2009, p. 159) “a research instrument is a survey, questionnaire, test, scale, rating or tool designed to measure the variable(s) characteristics or information of interest, often behavioral or psychological characteristics”. The research used questionnaire as the main research instrument to collect data. Burns, Gosh and Mukhopahyay (2009) describes questionnaire as a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information and opinions from respondents. Questionnaires were used because it minimizes bias and analysis of the data collected was streamlined towards the objectives of the study. The questions were adapted from other questionnaires namely the YFIT questionnaire by (Haber & Malloy, 2011) and (youth engagement toolkit) YET questionnaire designed by UNDP (2012), and modified in relation to the objectives of the research. The questionnaire comprised of closed-ended questions and it was self-administered, that is, it was delivered and filled by the respondents themselves and collected afterwards. The questionnaire was divided into three (3) categories centered around thirty-six (36) items. The categories included demographic data (4), perceptions of youth involvement (20) and perceptions of public policy making (12).

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

The importance of validity and reliability in the study were critical to the usefulness of the study and “can be approached through careful attention to a study’s conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are



presented” (Shadish *et al.*, 2002, p. 210). Frank and Wallen (2003) defined validity as-the degree to which correct inferences can be made based on results from an instrument (p. G-9). To ensure validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was given to a research expert in Marketing for review in terms of its content and construct. Also to ensure the validity, samples of the questionnaires were pre-tested. Pre-testing refers to a procedure that involves a trial run with a group of respondents to iron out fundamental problems in the survey design (Zikmund & Babin, 2007). Any inconsistencies in the questionnaire were corrected before fully scale data collection. Reliability is defined as the extent to which a scale is free from random errors and thus yields consistent results (Hair *et al.*, 1995). Calculating Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used procedure to estimate reliability, and Nunnally (1978) recommends 0.7 as the accepted benchmark for Cronbach's alpha. According to Nunnally (1978), if the coefficient alpha is too low, the indication is that the items measuring the scale have very little in common. Therefore, a Cronbach's alpha of at least 0.70 was accepted.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20) was used for data analysis and presentation of tables. The analysis included inferential and descriptive statistics.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.0 Introduction**

Research analysis was conducted using 120 questionnaires that were administered to young people within Madina-new road, Atomic junction and Madina Estates. Tables 4.1.1-4.1.4 indicate the demographic characteristics of the target group while tables 4.2.1-4.4.4 represented the descriptive and regression analysis.

**4.1 Demographic Analysis**

**Table 4.1.1 Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	60	50.0
Female	60	50.0
Total	120	100.0

**Source: Field work 2015**

The table above showed the gender of the respondents in this study. The table showed that there was equal participation of both male and female though gender was selected at random. Statistically both male and female recorded 50% each of the study population.

**Table 4.1.2 Age of Respondents**

Age Category	Frequency	Percent
16-20	30	25.0
21-25	64	53.3
26-30	19	15.8
31-35	6	5.0
Total	119	99.2
Missing	1	.8
Total	120	100.0

**Source: Field work 2015**

The table above showed the various levels or age brackets that the respondents were grouped into. The table indicated that respondents grouped within 21-25years formed the highest of all other

categories. 53.3% of the study population were represented within this age bracket. Meanwhile 5.0% of the study population were grouped within 31-35 years. This group represented the least in terms of figurative representation amongst the groups available.

**Table 4.1.3 Educational Background of Respondents**

Educational Category	Frequency	Percent
HND	7	5.8
First Degree	56	46.7
Second Degree	8	6.7
PhD	3	2.5
Professional Certificate	15	12.5
SHS	30	25.0
JHS	1	.8
Total	120	100.0

**Source: Field work 2015**

Table 4.1.3 showed the educational background of respondents. The information showed that 46.7% of the respondents represented the first degree educational category whereas 0.8% of the target population represented the junior high school (JHS) category. This results showed that there is a higher level of first degree representatives than other categories such as HND, second degree, PhD Professional certificate and SHS. Moreover the JHS level formed the least representation.

**Table 4.1.4 Location/closest location**

Community	Frequency	Percent
Madina-new road	62	51.7
Madina estates	29	24.2
Atomic junction	29	24.2
Total	120	100.0

**Source: Field work 2015**

The table above also indicated the locations of the respondents. Respondents from Madina-new road represented 51.7% of the study population whereas Madina estates and atomic junction represented 24.2% each of the target population.

#### **4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Public Policy**

**Table 4.2.1** Perceptions of Public Policy Making

Items of public policy making	N	Mean	Percent
My community has no formal policy making structure that will require my views	120	3.81	42.5
Policy making should provide and expand youth opportunities to become long term contributors	120	3.53	41.5
A public policy should be all inclusive	120	3.55	40.0
A public policy procedure should include developing the capacity of youth and adult to work collectively	120	2.97	37.5
I believe that the youth are too young to engage in policy making and that it should be left to adults	120	2.58	38.3
The policy should not be particular about the distribution of power	120	1.39	35.0
A policy should only engage youth passively in providing new ideas	120	2.54	33.0
A public policy should enforce the accomplishment of goals through youth	120	2.77	40.8
A public policy should link youth to comprehensive planning efforts	120	2.98	50.0
A public policy should empower the youth in ways that recognize differences in perspectives	120	2.88	40.0
Youth are unlikely to agitate if their needs are including in policy frameworks	120	2.57	34.0
Policies in general have no regard for youth opinions	120	2.83	33.5
Valid N (listwise)	120		

**Source: Field work 2015 Scale: 1-Strongly disagree 2-Disagree 3-Agree 4-Strongly Agree**

Table 4.2.1 displays information about the perception of youth on public policy making. The mean values showed which scale a greater number of the youth identified as most appropriate for items measured under public policy making. 42.5%, 41.5% and 40% of the youth indicated they strongly agree that their community have no formal policy making structure; policy makers should expand and provide youth opportunities and the fact that public policy should remain all inclusive. The corresponding mean scores of 3.81, 3.53 and 3.55 respectively represented these responses. Meanwhile other responses by the youth was distributed across the other scales.

Again the mean scores of 2.97 and 2.58 with corresponding rates of 37.5% and 38.3% of the youth agreed that a public policy procedure should include developing the capacity of youth and adult to work collectively and that policy making should be left to adults. More so 35% of the study population with a mean score of 1.39 indicated that youth strongly disagree that policy should not be particular about the distribution of power.

Furthermore 33%, 40.8% and 50% of the sampled population with a respective mean score of 2.54, 2.77 and 2.98 showed that respondents affirm the stance that public policy should enforce the accomplishment of goals through youth and also public policy should link youth to a comprehensive planning efforts. Meanwhile other responses were distributed across the other scales.

In synonymy 40%, 34% and 33.5% of respondents agreed on the following; public policy should empower the youth in ways that recognize differences in perspectives; Youth are unlikely to agitate if their needs are included in policy frameworks as well as Policies in general have no regard for youth opinions. 2.88, 2.57 and 2.83 represented the respective means of each response.

### **4.3 Descriptive Statistics on Perceptions of Involvement**

**Table 4.3.1 Perceptions of Youth on Community Readiness**

Items of community readiness	N	Mean	Percent
The community has strategies for recruiting the youth in public policy making	119	3.63	29.2
There are dedicated resources to cater for youth involvement practices	120	2.11	30.0
The community has processes in place to include youth voice	120	2.64	40.0
A complaint process is communicated, understandable and accessible to youth	120	2.17	45.8
There are programs in place to support youth to develop skills	120	2.37	37.5
Valid N (listwise)	119		

**Source: Field work 2015 Scale: 1-Strongly disagree 2-Disagree 3-Agree 4-Strongly Agree**

From table 4.3.1 the scale with the highest response rate was selected from the data gathered. 29.2% of the target population strongly disagreed that their community has strategies for recruiting the youth. A corresponding mean score of 3.63 was recorded to prove this. 30% of the youth also disagreed that there are resources dedicated to cater for youth involvement practices.

On the contrary 40% of youth agreed (mean=2.64) that the community have processes in place to include youth voice. 45.8% and 37.5% of the target population disagreed that complaint process as well as programs in place to support the youth. Mean scores that indicated these responses were 2.17 and 2.37.

**Table 4.3.2 Perceptions of Youth -Adult Partnership**

Items of Youth- Adult partnership	N	Mean	Percent
Youth will demonstrate when adult opinions are always considered	119	2.40	38.3
Youth and adults make decisions collaboratively	120	2.64	38.3
By working with adults youth develop skills and knowledge	120	2.69	43.3
By working with youth adults develop skills and knowledge	120	2.79	44.2
Youth have access to leaders who can address their concerns	120	2.57	30.8
Valid N (listwise)	119		

**Source: Field work 2015 Scale: 1-Strongly disagree 2-Disagree 3-Agree 4-Strongly Agree**

From table 4.3.2 38.3% of respondents disagreed on demonstrating when adult opinions are always considered. Furthermore respondents disagreed on the following items; youth and adult making decisions collaboratively; adults and youth developing skills and knowledge from each other as well as a disagreement on youth having access to leaders who can address their concerns. Corresponding means and response rates indicated this.

**Table 4.3.3 Perceptions of Youth Leadership Decision making**

Items of Youth leadership Decision making	N	Mean	Percent
Youth lead in implementing projects and initiatives	120	2.72	40.0
Youth are unlikely to agitate if needs of the society are made to override theirs	120	2.59	34.2
Youth are part of planning committee within the community	119	2.61	36.7
Youth are involved in developing, reviewing and updating relevant policies	120	2.52	42.5
Youth voice shapes the direction and goals of projects	120	2.51	37.5
Valid N (listwise)	119		

**Source: Field work 2015 Scale: 1-Strongly disagree 2-Disagree 3-Agree 4-Strongly Agree**

From table 4.3.3 the youth indicated disagreement with all the items measured under youth leadership decision making. Though other respondents provided varying responses across the scales provided, the scale with the highest response was selected across these items.

**Table 4.3.4 Perceptions of Youth Diversity**

Items of Diversity	N	Mean	Percent
Aside traditional meetings youth use the media to engage in policy contributions	120	2.75	40.8
Youth are educated on unique cultural considerations	120	2.63	39.2
Efforts are made to ensure that youth participate from their own perspective	119	2.53	41.7
Community engages youth with different perspectives	120	2.59	35.8
Adults are respectful and knowledgeable of youth cultures and inheritance	120	2.56	36.7
Valid N (listwise)	119		

**Source: Field work 2015 Scale: 1-Strongly disagree 2-Disagree 3-Agree 4-Strongly Agree**  
The arithmetic mean scores of 2.75, 2.63, 2.53, 2.59 and 2.56 indicated that youth generally agreed

on the consideration of diversity of perspectives and culture within public policy making.

#### **4.4 Inferential Statistics**

From the descriptive statistics inferences were made to help achieve the objectives of this study.

To achieve the objectives regression and correlation analysis was used.

**Table 4.4.1 Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.470 <sup>a</sup>	.221	.214	4.935

a. Predictors: (Constant), Involvement

b. Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Public Policy

The table above indicates a summary of the importance of the variable used in this study. As shown,  $R=0.47$  indicates that perceptions of involvement is positively associated with perceptions of public policy making. “R” is notably the regression coefficient whereas R square ( $R^2$ ) represents the coefficient of determination. The coefficient of determination was given as 0.221 which means that 22.1% of variability in perceptions of public policy is determined or explained by perceptions of involvement. The coefficient of determination also described the effect involvement has on public policy making. It was observed that there was a positive effect of perceptions of youth involvement in policy making. Based on this result  $H_1$  was rejected whereas  $H_{A1}$  was accepted because youth involvement has an effect on public policy making.

**Table 4.4.2 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	788.746	1	788.746	32.381	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	2776.805	114	24.358		
Total	3565.552	115			

a. Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Public Policy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Involvement

Also table 4.4.2 showed the analysis of variance within the data gathered. Statistically the table is summarized as,  $F(1, 114) = 32.381, p=0.000$ . This indicates that at a degree of freedom, 114 items were measured out of 120 possible items obtaining an F-test value of 32.381 indicating that perceptions of involvement is significant to perceptions of public policy making at  $p<0.05$ . At the



F value, the critical value was determined as 5.3 indicating that the null hypothesis in this study was rejected. This basis is reached because the critical value remains within the domain of the F value hence arriving at this conclusion.

**Table 4.4.3** **Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	19.984	2.389		8.364	.000
Involvement	.262	.046	.470	5.690	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Public Policy

From this table above a statistical model was reached to summarize the whole phenomenon of youth involvement in public policy making. Observably, a simple linear model was formed;

$$Y = a + bX \quad \text{where;}$$

Y is the dependent variable

“a” is the constant in the model

“b” is the coefficient of X

X is the independent variable

Contextually, this study adopted similar model in the form;

$$PPP = 19.984 + 0.262I \quad \text{where;}$$

PPP is the perceptions of public policy

19.984 is the constant in the model

0.262 is the coefficient of “I”

I is perceptions of Involvement

The model highlights the positive effect perceptions of involvement have on perceptions of public policy making.

Also a unit change in “I” will cause a positive change in PPP by the coefficient of I (0.262) given other variables or circumstances. For instance, a one unit increase in involvement will cause PPP to increase by 0.262 holding other factors constant. More so, PPP will always be equal to 19.984 when “I” is non-existent or zero.

Furthermore the standardized coefficient beta value shows the correlation between two variables. As observed, there is a positive but weak relationship (correlation) between perceptions of involvement and perceptions of public policy. Statistically,  $r = 0.470$  indicated this relationship. Based on this finding  $H_0$  was rejected whilst  $H_A$  was accepted because a relationship exist between youth involvement and perceptions of public policy making.

In conclusion from the table above, it was indicated that youth involvement was significant to public policy making. The asymptotic (or p) value of 0.000 showed this. From this result  $H_2$  was rejected and  $H_{A2}$  was accepted because perceptions of youth involvement is significant to perceptions of public policy making.

**Table 4.4.4 Correlational Matrix**

Kendall's tau_b correlation		Community Readiness	Youth-Adult Partnership	Youth Leadership Decision making	Perceptions of Diversity	Perceptions of Public Policy
	r	1.000	.316**	.361**	.339**	.107
Community Readiness	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.108
	N	119	118	118	118	119
Youth-Adult Partnership	r	.316**	1.000	.415**	.525**	.435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000

	N	118	119	118	118	119
	r	.361**	.415**	1.000	.348**	.304**
Youth Leadership Decision making	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	118	118	119	118	119
	r	.339**	.525**	.348**	1.000	.332**
Perceptions of Youth Diversity	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	118	118	118	119	119
	r	.107	.435**	.304**	.332**	1.000
Perceptions of Public Policy	Sig. (2-tailed)	.108	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	119	119	119	119	120

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). **Chronbach's alpha= 0.83**

From the table above a Kendall's tau\_b correlational matrix was used to achieve the forth objective of the study as well as testing the hypothesis. It was observed from the table that community readiness was positive but weakly correlated with perceptions of public policy making. A correlational value of  $r=0.107$  indicated this.

A correlation coefficient of 0.435 was shown between youth -adult partnership and perceptions of public policy. The figure showed a positive but weak relationship between youth -adult partnership and perceptions of public policy. Similarly the correlation values of 0.304 and 0.332 indicated a positive and weak relationship between youth leadership decision-making and perceptions of public policy as well as perceptions of youth diversity and perceptions of public policy making. Conclusively, there was no involvement factor that highly correlates or influences perceptions of public policy making. From this analysis  $H_{A3}$  was accepted while  $H_3$  was rejected because none of the involvement factors highly influences perceptions of public policy making.

The table also indicates that the set of items used for gathering the responses are reliable to a rate of 83%. The Chronbach's alpha reliability showed a good fit of questions posed to respondents.

**Table 4.4.5 Summary of Results on tested Research Hypothesis**

Null Hypothesis	Alternative Hypothesis	Remarks
H <sub>0</sub> : Youth involvement has no relationship with public policy making	H <sub>A</sub> : Youth involvement has a relationship with public policy making	H <sub>A</sub> - Accepted
H <sub>1</sub> : Youth involvement has no effect on public policy making	H <sub>A1</sub> : Youth involvement has an effect on public policy making	H <sub>A1</sub> - Accepted
H <sub>2</sub> : Youth involvement is not significant to public policy making	H <sub>A2</sub> : Youth involvement is significant to public policy making	H <sub>A2</sub> - Accepted
H <sub>3</sub> : Some youth involvement factor(s) influences public policy making	H <sub>A3</sub> : No youth involvement factor highly influences public policy making	H <sub>A3</sub> - Accepted

## **Discussion**

- *Examining the relationship between youth involvement and public policy making*

According to the analysis conducted, it was indicated that youth involvement has a positive but weak relationship with public policy making. Meanwhile the specified theory of adhering to a successful public policy making as posited by (Bernette & Brennan, 2006; Bloom, 2000) highlighted one of its key areas as 'the need to link youth involvement to policy efforts'. This key area indicates that there is, and should be, a direct relationship between youth involvement and policy making as both constructs are interdependent on each other.

Furthermore Bading, Anderson and Sandmann (2009) indicated in their study that youth are happier when they are initiated into policy making processes. This assertion gives more depth to

the findings that involvement is positively related to policy making. Serido (2011a) in Toronto, Canada posited that supportive relationship reduced the barriers of participation in policy making.

- *Determining the effect of youth involvement on public policy making*

This study found out that youth involvement had a positive effect on public policy making. Pitmann (2000) showed the effectiveness of involving youth in policy making when he opined that the achievement of visions can only be done through perpetually involving youth in decision making processes. Urban (2010) studies conducted in United States also supports this view point. He indicated that youth involvement in policy procedures develops attitudes positively. This assertion is seen to be an effect of involving youth in societal discourse. More so, because of the variety of perspectives that the youth bring to the table, recent studies conducted by (Flage, 2010) showed that adults are beginning to show a positive change in attitudes and behaviours due to the impact of youth involvement in policy making. On the contrary, Serido (2011b) posited that over involvement of youth in policy making could potentially increase the barriers to ethnic minority within the society. Therefore per this result coupled with the results attained in the current study a fine balance of youth assertion is proposed in order to minimize the adverse effects.

- *Determining the significance of youth involvement to public policy making*

In this study youth involvement was found to be significant to public policy making. The study by Lawford (2012) coupled with the conceptual design of (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) indicated that the personal input of youth in social discourse significantly relates to the overall successful development within a given community. Subramaniam and Mancola (2010) in a study about youth perspectives on friendly culture posited that there was a need for organizations to include youth in

policy processes. This position also supports how significant it is to involve youth to promote developmental agenda.

To further appreciate the significance of youth involvement in policy making, Zeldin's (2004) study showed that the act of engaging youth in policy or decision making significantly reduces the likelihood of interpersonal violence and delinquency while it also helps in promoting community belongingness and enhancement of youth capabilities in policy making.

- *Determine which youth involvement factor(s) highly influences public policy making*

According to this study none of the factors of youth involvement postulated by (Coburn, et al 2002) highly influences public policy making. But rather a gamut of all these factors influences public policy making. Though Zeldin (2012) posited in his findings that youth-adult partnership (Y-AP) is a unifying concept and thus youth -adult partnership should be seen as an active ingredient positive for youth development, the findings of this study especially on aspects of involvement somewhat supports this view. For instance, the Y-AP construct measured in this study showed a positive but weak influence on public policy even though this construct appears to have the highest correlated coefficient amongst others such as community readiness, youth-leadership decision making and diversity. According to Hart (1997) ladder, Shier (2001) policy pathways, Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) psychological model, McCurdy and Daro model (2001) as well as the sequential specificity model (Ngai & Cheung, 1997) and (Easton, 1965) political system model, youth involvement in various countries would have to adopt a step-by-step approach towards enhancing the collaborative works of youth and adults with community structures in a multi-diversity society to make a good representation of youth in public policy discourse with the aim of dealing with societal issues.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary**

In summary the problems and grievances raised by the youth concerning the failure of policy makers to include them (youth) in the process was displayed in the findings of the study through a questionnaire survey carried out. The sample views gathered from the youth indicated their readiness to participate willingly to society reforms and policies other than alienating them.

Thus this study examined the relationship between perceptions of youth involvement and public policy making. Specifically, the study determined the nature of the relationship and indicated through a regression and correlation analysis that the relationship was positive and weak.

The study also tested the significance of youth involvement in policy making where it concluded that involvement of youth in dealing with societal issues is vital to the success of public policy making. Furthermore the results of this study indicated that involvement of youth has an effect on public policy making.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were arrived at;

- Youth in La-Nkwatanang municipality expect to be involved in policy making of any kind.
- Youth involvement has a positive influence on development of society and public policy reforms
- There is a positive and significant effect of youth involvement in policy making
- The factors of youth involvement singularly have positive and weak influence on public policy making but the focus on synergizing this singular factors positively and significantly influences public policy making.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- A community platform should be created to involve the youth in public policy processes since it is significant in reducing various forms of violent displeasure.
- Adults should be educated and encouraged on the need to involve youth in policy making as they (youth) are bound to take charge of the works that need to be continued in the nearby future.
- A focus by authorities on the factors of involvement would help youth to continuously be a part of the policy process since synergizing this factors will limit the shortfalls that are likely to be encountered during the policy processes.
- A periodic mentor and mentee sessions should be held in various communities so that the youth may have a benchmark on which to improve their public policy skills and knowledge.

### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

The study is limited in scope because it did not cover all the factors of involvement. Again, due to constraint in resources the study focused on a few of the youth in the selected communities. Therefore the views gathered may not be quantitatively representative enough.



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## **APPENDIX**

### **TOPIC: PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC POLICY MAKING: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED AREAS WITHIN THE LA-NKWANTANANG MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY**

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUTH OF MADINA-NEW ROAD, ESTATES AND ATOMIC**

Please kindly spend some time to answer the following questions as accurately as possible. You are assured that any information provided would be used for academic purposes only and will be held strictly confidential.

**Please, tick or circle the correct answer where applicable.**

#### **A: PERSONAL DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS**

1) Gender:

- a) Male
- b) Female

2) Age:

- a) 16- 20
- b) 21- 25
- c) 26- 30
- d) 31-35

3) Educational Background:

- a) HND
- b) First degree
- c) Second degree
- d) PhD
- e) Professional certificate
- f) SHS
- g) JHS

4) Location/closest location:

- a) Madina-new road
- b) Madina estates
- c) Atomic junction

**B: PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY MAKING**

The following set of questions will require that you open your thoughts to general policy making procedures that concerns your community either being discussed in the media or community itself

**Answer by ticking in the empty boxes below, where 1- Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Agree 4- Strongly agree**

<b>Items on public policy making</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
5)My community has no formal policy making structure that will require my views				
6)Policy making should provide and expand youth opportunities to become long term contributors to community development				
7)A public policy should be all inclusive (reach out to all youth)				
8)A public policy procedure should include developing the capacity of youth and adults to work collectively				
9)I believe that the youth are too young to engage in policy making and that it should be left to adults				
10)A public policy should not be particular about paying special attention to the distribution of power between adults and youth				
11)A policy should only engage youth passively in providing new ideas that strengthen communities				
12)A public policy should enforce the accomplishment of missions/goals through youth involvement				
13)A public policy should link youth to comprehensive planning efforts				
14)A public policy should empower the youth in ways that recognize differences in perspective and contribution				
15)Youth are unlikely to agitate if their needs are included in policy frameworks				
16)Policies in general only turns out to be a mere formality with no regard for the opinions of the youth				



**C: PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC POLICY MAKING**

The following set of questions will require that you open your thoughts to general participation or engagements of youth in public policy procedures that concerns your community either being discussed in the media or community itself

Answer by ticking in the empty boxes below, where 1- Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Agree 4- Strongly agree

<b>Items on youth involvement</b>				
<b>Community Readiness</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
17)The community has strategies for recruiting the youth in public policy making				
18)There are dedicated resources to cater for youth involvement practices				
19)The community has processes in place to include youth voice in policy procedures				
20)A complaint process is communicated, understandable and accessible to youth				
21)There are programs in place to support the youth in developing their skills				
<b>Youth-Adult Partnership</b>				
22)Youth will demonstrate when they are involved in public policy deliberations and the adult opinions always stands out or considered				
23)When working on projects youth and adults make decisions collaboratively to set clear roles and responsibilities				
24)Through working with adults youth develop skills and knowledge				
25)Through working with youth adults develop skills and knowledge				
26)Youth have access to leaders who can address their concerns				
<b>Youth Leadership Decision Making</b>				
27)Youth have a leadership role in implementing projects and initiatives				
28)Youth are involved in developing, reviewing and updating relevant policies and processes				
29)Youth are unlikely to agitate if needs of the entire society are made to override the needs of the youth during public policy deliberations				
30)Youth voice shapes the direction and goals of projects or initiatives				
31)Youth are part of planning committee within the community				
<b>Diversity</b>				
32)The Youth tend to use the media as a channel to engage in policy contributions aside traditional face-face meetings				
33)Youth are educated on unique cultural consideration whether historical or political				
34)Efforts are made by the community to ensure that Youth can safely participate from their own unique cultural perspectives				
35)The community engages youth with different perspectives				
36)Adults involved with youth engagement are respectful and knowledgeable of the cultures of youth participants				



41	1	3	2	2	2	4	4	4	1	3	1	3	3	4	2	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	1	2	3	4	4	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	
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<b>117</b>	1	2	5	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4
<b>118</b>	1	3	5	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4
<b>119</b>	1	2	6	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	3	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	3	1
<b>120</b>	2	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4