



The Influence of Holistic Transformation on Community Development in Eastern Uganda Namely: Jinja City, Mbale City, Tororo District, Soroti City and Katakwi District

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of holistic transformation on community development in Eastern Uganda. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to assess the influence of physical, psychological, and spiritual transformation on community development. A case study research design was adopted, employing a quantitative approach to collect the required data. Out of 236 questionnaires distributed, 230 were successfully returned, representing a response rate of 97.45%. Data obtained from the respondents were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques with the aid of SPSS Version 23. The respondents were drawn from diverse stakeholder groups, including religious leaders, district councilors, community members, cultural leaders, and representatives of community-based organizations. This diversity provided a comprehensive perspective on the relationship between holistic transformation and community development. The findings revealed that holistic transformation accounted for 74.4% of the variation in community development outcomes, indicating a statistically significant and substantial influence. The study concludes that holistic transformation exerts a strong and meaningful effect on promoting sustainable community development. In contemporary districts and cities in Uganda, holistic transformation remains a critical determinant in achieving and sustaining community progress. The results further indicate that physical and psychological transformation significantly influence development outcomes, particularly in enhancing access to, attention toward, and utilization of community resources, key components of sustainable development. However, psychological transformation demonstrated a statistically significant influence, suggesting the presence of underlying psychosocial challenges that may constrain development outcomes when not ad-

equately addressed. The findings also highlight the complex interaction between individuals and their environment, emphasizing that community development efforts may be limited where community settings remain resistant to transformative initiatives. Based on these findings, the study recommends that, given the statistically significant and strongest positive influence of spiritual transformation, district leaders, faith-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations should integrate spiritual empowerment programs into community mobilization strategies and support interfaith platforms that enhance collective community action. Furthermore, the study recommends that national and local governments in Eastern Uganda should stimulate physical transformation through targeted infrastructure and livelihood development programs. These should include expanding access to clean water, housing improvement initiatives, health facilities, and community road networks, alongside the maintenance of existing infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability. Finally, given that psychological transformation exhibited a statistically significant negative influence on community development, stakeholders in Eastern Uganda should strengthen psychosocial support systems, particularly in communities affected by poverty, conflict, and trauma, to foster positive mindsets and mitigate attitudes that hinder sustainable community development.

Subject Areas

Sociology

Keywords

Holistic Transformation, Community Development

1. Introduction

This study examined the influence of holistic transformation on community development in Eastern Uganda, specifically Jinja, Mbale, Tororo, Soroti, and Katakwi. In this study, holistic transformation was conceptualized as the independent variable, while community development served as the dependent variable. This chapter presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose, objectives, and research questions. It outlined the scope of the study, its significance and justification, the conceptual framework, and the operational definitions of key terms. Holistic transformation is conceptualized in this study as a multi-dimensional process that simultaneously addresses physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of individual and community well-being to promote sustainable development. For clarity, each dimension is operationally defined as follows: Physical Transformation: Refers to improvements in tangible, material, and infrastructural aspects that enhance community health, mobility, and living conditions. In this study, physical transformation was measured through questionnaire items assessing access to clean water, healthcare facilities, housing

quality, road infrastructure, and livelihood support programs. **Psychological Transformation:** Refers to changes in individual and collective mental states, attitudes, and behavioral patterns that influence community engagement, resilience, and decision-making. Psychological transformation was assessed using items that evaluated respondents' sense of self-efficacy, motivation, problem-solving capacity, and attitudes toward communal development initiatives and **Spiritual Transformation:** Refers to the development of values, beliefs, and practices that foster moral guidance, social cohesion, and a sense of purpose within the community. Spiritual transformation was measured through items capturing participation in faith-based or cultural activities, ethical orientation, communal solidarity, and engagement in collective spiritual initiatives. By explicitly defining and measuring these dimensions, the study ensures that holistic transformation is understood not as an abstract concept but as a set of operationally quantifiable variables, allowing for rigorous analysis of their influence on community development in Eastern Uganda.

1.1. Background of the Study

Globally, holistic transformation has significantly contributed to community development, with studies indicating that it accounts for over 78.4% of development outcomes worldwide. In Europe, countries like Italy have experienced substantial societal transformation through ministries committed to long-term investments in physical, economic, and spiritual well-being, transforming approximately 56.3% of communities (Linsky & Darabya, 2019) [1]. According to OECD (2017) [2], achieving sustainable societal change requires holistic and integrated approaches to build environmental and social resilience.

Holistic transformation creates opportunities not only for marginalized groups such as the poor and unemployed but also fosters collective well-being across entire societies. In France, holistic transformation has contributed 66.2% to improvements in physical well-being, promoting sustainable development (Harsch, 2019) [3]. A successful development strategy today demands a holistic and inclusive policy framework, integrating gender perspectives at all stages of design, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring. Ladaphongphatthana (2021) [4] elaborates that more than 50% of European countries, including Cyprus, Greece, Spain, Germany, and Austria, have embraced holistic transformation to drive community development. In Portugal, this approach contributed 69.2% toward sustainable development, while in the United Kingdom, it has influenced 79.1% of community growth.

In the United States, holistic transformation has played a critical role, contributing 83.1% to community development. States like Colorado and Florida have also recorded 56.3% and 61.2% improvements, respectively. This underscores the growing role of holistic strategies in American community sustainability (Fosu, 2022) [5]. In Asia, holistic transformation has shown mixed outcomes. For instance, South Korea has seen a 52.4% increase in community development, while countries like India have faced challenges due to deeply rooted cultural and religious

beliefs. In the Philippines, holistic efforts have influenced 50% of community development, while Indonesia reported 34.3% progress. Many Christians around the world implement holistic development programs, although not always involving the church directly (Heist & Cnaan, 2016) [6]. Robèrt (2017) [7] emphasized that the church is not merely a physical structure but a community of believers, called to engage actively in all aspects of societal life, demonstrating God's love through practical service.

Woolnough (2014) [8] highlighted the biblical foundation of holistic care through the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37), which illustrates how genuine neighborly love addresses the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of others. This aligns with the essence of holistic transformation, caring for the whole person. Meanwhile, de Cámara *et al.* (2021) [9] observed that churches have been instrumental in facilitating holistic community assessments through focus group discussions, enabling members to reflect on current realities and plan for future transformation. In a world faced with violence, poverty, inequality, and spiritual emptiness, many people are turning to holistic models that integrate faith, psychology, and development.

Jumbe *et al.* (2024) [10] noted that holistic transformation, as practiced by Christian communities and Muslims, addresses both spiritual and socio-economic needs. Despite challenges, it has brought hope, improved livelihoods, and deepened faith across many communities. He further explained that when churches lead holistic change, it not only transforms lives but contributes directly to sustainable development. Holistic transformation equips people to help themselves, especially by fostering positive spiritual and psychological mindsets. This has been evident in countries across North America, Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa, although success varies due to differences in cultural context and implementation strategies.

African countries have long grappled with high poverty rates, often linked to corruption and ineffective governance, leaving more than 80% of the population living below the poverty line. In response to these challenges, holistic transformation was introduced by Christian believers with the hope that it would bring spiritual, economic, and social renewal. However, despite these efforts, the intended transformation has been slow to materialize in many African nations (Jumbe *et al.*, 2024) [10].

Holistic transformation strategies proposed for Africa include back casting, community participation, transparent governance, and cultural sensitivity, all designed to promote self-sufficient and sustainable development. In the same way, Edquist (2014) [11] noted that the ultimate goal of holistic transformation is to remove barriers to development by creating a climate of empowerment, responsibility, trust, and motivation spiritually, physically, and economically. This shift in mindset was to be facilitated through education, training, and sustainable resource mobilization, to support development in the third-world countries.

According to Ababa (2011) [12], holistic transformation has positively influenced about 46.4% of community development outcomes in African countries.

Despite this, progress remains uneven. Countries like Ghana (34.1%), Uganda (21.2%), Cameroon (19.4%), and the Central African Republic (18.4%) show minimal gains. Others, including Kenya (42.3%), Morocco (41.1%), South Africa (45.2%), and Senegal (40.1%), have seen slightly better outcomes. These disparities point to broader issues such as inadequate local ownership, weak church involvement, and persistent cultural barriers.

Contrarily, the Lausanne Movement (2011) [13] emphasized transparency as central to building trust and confidence in the development process. Churches have been instrumental in promoting holistic transformation through spiritual care and community outreach. Meanwhile, Thomas (2018) [14] added that missionaries played a vigorous role in uplifting vulnerable communities by integrating innovative, socio-ecological approaches to development. Many local churches in Africa do not view development as part of their mission, relegating it to specialized departments or external organizations. This disconnect often limits the impact of church-based interventions. Nonetheless, the worsening moral and economic conditions across Africa have led some Baptist churches to reconsider their role, acknowledging that Christ's mission is holistic, addressing the full spectrum of human needs (Adewale & Oyekan, 2021) [15].

Adewale and Oyekan (2021) [15] argued that a deep understanding of the socio-ecological systems within which communities operate is essential for long-term transformation. Holistic transformation, therefore, is not merely about meeting immediate needs but about cultivating individual and communal consciousness to identify and address root causes of poverty and underdevelopment.

Mbogo (2015) [16] observed that holistic transformation has contributed approximately 41.2% to the development of impoverished communities in East Africa. Holistic community development involves the progressive improvement of all aspects of life and requires active participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including churches and mosques. However, the impact varies across countries like Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda, largely depending on how well church leaders understand and implement the concept of holistic transformation. Agbiji and Swart (2015) [17] emphasized the role of Christian education as a transformative tool. They describe the church as "salt and light" (Matt. 5: 13), uniquely positioned to address the deep-rooted challenges of injustice, corruption, and prejudice. Yet, Koenig (2009) [18] cautioned that for churches to be effective agents of transformation, they must understand their historical context and be able to strategically plan for future development.

Missionaries in East Africa have historically supported holistic transformation through initiatives in health, literacy, and vocational training (Adesina, 2013) [19]. Despite notable efforts, significant gaps remain. Holistic development must address the full spectrum of human needs, spiritual, emotional, and physical, since focusing on one while neglecting the others results in limited and unsustainable impact. However, Woolnough (2013) [20] critiques the church's role, suggesting that many Baptist churches have not fully integrated community development into their mis-

sion. Without a spiritual dimension, church-led programs risk becoming “unholistic” and ineffective. Operations Mobilization, a faith-based organization, has sought to bridge this gap by encouraging partnerships between churches and poor communities to foster transformation.

The church’s mission, as described in Isaiah 42: 5-8 and Acts 1:8, is to be a light to the nations, reconciling humanity to God. Holistic transformation through the church involves more than worship; it includes being present and active in addressing community needs (Dada & Olaniyan, 2020) [21]. Yet, despite the efforts by various churches and mosques in East Africa, many communities, including those in Uganda, continue to face challenges in building sustainable faith and development structures.

Dada and Olaniyan (2020) [21] emphasized that Uganda, like many African nations, has deeply rooted traditional practices that frequently conflict with Christian and Muslim values, stimulating missionary efforts, particularly by Baptists since 1985, to foster spiritual, psychological, and physical transformation within communities. Although these initiatives have achieved some success in shifting mindsets, they have yielded limited tangible development outcomes, with Western and Northern Uganda recording mixed results and Eastern Uganda experiencing comparatively minimal impact from similar faith-led efforts. This disparity suggests a gap in understanding the unique contextual factors shaping development in Eastern Uganda, motivating this study to examine the influence of holistic transformation on community development in the region.

According to the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (2022) [22], large sections of the population still experience inadequate housing and underdevelopment in both rural and urban areas. The report reveals alarming poverty levels in key districts: 74.3% of communities in Jinja City, 76.4% in Mbale City, 81.4% in Tororo District, 78.2% in Soroti, and a staggering 93.1% in Katakwi continue to live under harsh and impoverished conditions.

The World Vision Faith and Development Guiding Framework (2017) [23] highlighted that while numerous international initiatives have made progress in strengthening community capacity, many development strategies tend to focus solely on capacity building, often ignoring the importance of a holistic perspective in achieving lasting sustainability.

In response to these limitations, holistic transformation, which integrates spiritual, physical, and psychological dimensions, has emerged as a more comprehensive and potentially effective approach to sustainable development. However, empirical evidence on its influence on community development in Eastern Uganda remains limited. This gap highlights the relevance of the present study, which seeks to examine the influence of holistic transformation on community development in Eastern Uganda.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was developed following an extensive re-

view of literature related to the study variables (see **Figure 1**). It illustrated the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. Within this framework, holistic transformation is conceptualized as encompassing three interrelated dimensions: physical, psychological, and spiritual transformation. Together, these dimensions are presumed to collectively shape and enhance the level and quality of community development within a given context.

On the other hand, community development was measured through several key indicators, including: working together, taking action to create change, initiating community-led efforts, skill development and capacity building, creating opportunities, empowerment, self-sufficiency, and the ability to make independent decisions. This relationship formed the basis for the study’s investigation into how holistic transformation influences community development in Eastern Uganda.

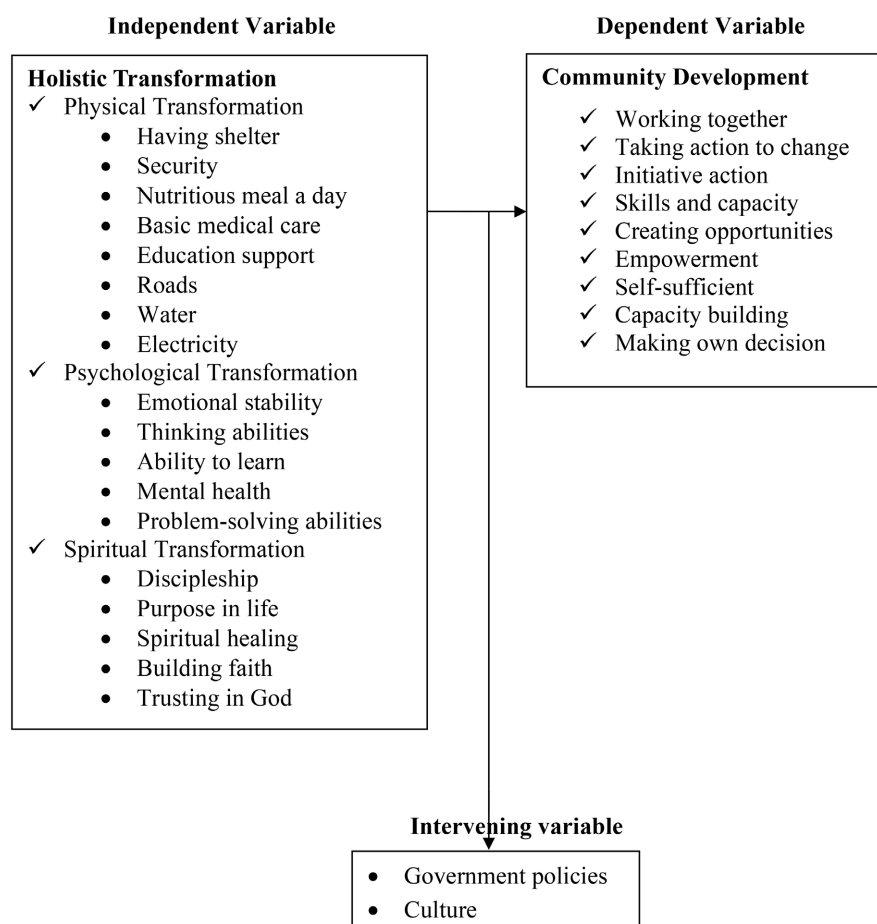


Figure 1. Conceptual frameworks.

Polet (2018) [24] emphasized that community development fosters self-reliance and collective responsibility. It supports people in becoming active participants in their own development, enhancing both individual and community well-being. They further noted that true development originates at the grassroots level, where local people identify their needs and lead initiatives to promote well-

being.

Andrews and Erickson (2012) [25] advocated for a self-help approach, emphasizing collaboration between communities and governments. She argues that both bottom-up (community-led) and top-down (government-led) approaches must work together. For this to happen effectively, each development project must be tailored to the community's unique context.

According to Haggis *et al.* (2013) [26], poor physical environments negatively affect individuals and families, limiting their ability to live long, healthy lives. Access to clean air and safe water is essential for good health; contaminated water sources increase the risk of illnesses and cancer within communities. When physical transformation is integrated into community development, it can reduce crime, improve access to housing, create better jobs, and enhance overall well-being, though it may not entirely eliminate all challenges while humans are not the only species that alter their environments, our modifications tend to be more drastic and permanent. Cities such as New York, Singapore, and Hong Kong SAR have undergone massive physical changes over centuries. Constructing shelters, improving infrastructure, and renovating buildings are all part of this transformation, aimed at enhancing quality of life for future generations.

Sahebzadeh and Nobaya (2012) [27] highlighted that physical transformation can involve constructing new facilities, modifying existing ones, or eliminating harmful structures. Health promotion, for instance, can be achieved by removing environmental toxins, building healthcare facilities, and creating walkable neighborhoods.

Savannah *et al.* (2018) [28] argued that improving the physical appearance of a community increases pride and reduces crime. Renovating buildings or cleaning up neighborhoods fosters a sense of ownership, leading residents to maintain their surroundings more responsibly. When environments are neglected, people often feel less accountable for their behavior. Conversely, improved surroundings can shift attitudes and behaviors positively. They emphasized that inclusive physical structures like access ramps, public transport systems, and protected bus stops promote accessibility and mobility. Similarly, investing in roads, drainage systems, and other infrastructure in anticipation of commercial development can create jobs and attract investment. O'Callaghan (2017) [29] added that restoring green spaces, planting trees, or cleaning polluted sites contribute significantly to environmental health and urban renewal.

Francis (2013) [30] asserted that educational facilities also shape community development. The condition and design of schools influence learning experiences and expectations. As O'Callaghan (2015) [31] explained that architectural layouts whether open campuses or corridor-based classrooms impact the learning environment. Schools integrated within community facilities, like museums or offices, offer expanded educational resources.

Silva (2014) [32] emphasizes the value of bringing people together through fellowship, education, and mutual support. Skills training in parenting, trauma heal-

ing, entrepreneurship, and tailoring, alongside spiritual development, all contribute to sustainable community transformation.

In conclusion, physical transformation encompasses more than infrastructure. It involves reshaping how people live, interact, and grow together in a community. It contributes to healthier lives, greater social cohesion, economic opportunities, and long-term sustainability. For holistic community development to take root, physical change must go hand-in-hand with psychological and spiritual transformation.

Burton *et al.* (2017) [33] examined the psychological transformation of survivors of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency in Northern Uganda. Their research highlighted the importance of community reintegration programs and culturally sensitive mental health interventions in supporting healing and identity reconstruction. Similarly, Jorge-Monteiro *et al.* (2014) [34] investigated the integration of indigenous healing practices with modern psychotherapy. Their findings revealed that incorporating cultural narratives enhances psychological resilience and promotes transformation among Ugandan patients.

Nabunya *et al.* (2020) [35] further noted that psychoeducation and peer support significantly facilitate transformative changes in self-concept and emotional regulation among adolescents. According to Tebes (2017) [36], psychological transformation also involves enhanced self-efficacy and the redefinition of gender roles, which challenge existing patriarchal norms. In the same vein,

In Tanzania, Pillay (2017) [37] explored youth identity transformation and found that shifting socio-economic conditions and exposure to globalized ideas result in a dynamic and ongoing process of psychological transformation, often involving cultural negotiation.

Dzidic *et al.* (2024) [38] emphasized that recognizing communal values and rites of passage is essential for psychological transformation in African contexts, offering a contrast to Western individualistic models. Likewise, underscored the foundational role of African spirituality in both personal and communal transformation, arguing that spiritual beliefs and practices are central to understanding psychological change in Africa.

Maseko *et al.* (2017) [39] elaborated that psychological transformation plays a vital role in sustainable community development by shaping how individuals perceive themselves and engage with their communities. Transforming community psychology involves understanding people within their environments and using this knowledge to improve well-being. It is a value-based field that promotes emotional stability, cognitive growth, and active engagement in societal development. In the same way, Adams *et al.* (2015) [40] highlighted that community psychology aims to enhance the quality of life by integrating action with local cultural norms and community needs. Psychological transformation fosters positive change by reshaping attitudes and behaviors, building resilience, promoting justice, and advocating for equality, particularly for marginalized groups. Psychological empowerment expands community participation and facilitates social change. Trans-

forms thinking patterns that eventually lead to tangible physical and developmental outcomes. Community psychology embraces diversity and inclusion, recognizing the value of multiple perspectives in achieving comprehensive and sustainable change.

Spiritual transformation in Africa has increasingly been recognized as a vital component of community development. Scholars such as Tricket (2019) [41] argued that spiritual renewal, particularly among youth, fosters ethical leadership and social responsibility when approached through integrated spiritual and social disciplines.

Boaheng (2023) [42] explained that the theological basis for spiritual transformation is powerfully presented in Romans 12: 1-2, where Paul urges believers to offer themselves as “living sacrifices”, renewing their minds rather than conforming to the world. This renewal, as Nwanguma (2020) [43] affirmed, is foundational for ethical living and community development. Spiritual transformation reshapes African believers’ perspectives on justice, peace, and compassion, which are essential for sustainable social progress. The mind is a key player in transformation. Renewed thinking enables individuals to discern God’s will and engage in holistic living, including material well-being (Ps. 35: 27) and spiritual abundance (John 10: 10).

Chitando *et al.* (2013) [44] tie these spiritual values directly to development outcomes, arguing that principles like integrity and accountability are essential for lasting societal change. Despite the theological richness, Mang (2014) [45] critiques African churches for not translating spiritual engagement into tangible economic or social progress. Many churches fail to address structural poverty or promote economic diversification. Poverty persists not only due to a lack of material resources but also from unfulfilled aspirations, issues that should be challenged through transformative spiritual leadership. The irony of intense religiosity, 62% Christian in Sub-Saharan Africa, alongside systemic corruption, highlights a gap between belief and practice. Driu *et al.* (2014) [46] raise concerns about religious morality in Africa, especially given the erosion of traditional values by modernity and globalization. Yet, religion whether Christian, Islamic, or traditional, still holds potential for societal transformation, serving as a moral compass and a prophetic voice.

Andrews and Erickson (2012) [25] noted that religion fosters vital values like honesty and tolerance, which are missing in many African political systems. Weak institutions, corruption, and lack of transparency, especially in countries like Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, stifle social and democratic progress. The disconnection between spiritual teachings and societal ethics must be addressed if religion is to be a genuine catalyst for change. Similarly, Gertner (2012) [47] affirms that both African Traditional Religion and Christianity emphasize moral formation through teaching, rituals, and community participation. These processes foster hope and resilience amid harsh socio-political realities. Faith communities must become active agents of transformation, where spiritual teachings are lived out in

practical, community-enhancing ways.

According to Nomugisha and Mwebaze (2025) [48], Uganda's government has embraced a multi-dimensional approach to community development, centered on local participation, economic empowerment, and the enhancement of community well-being. This strategy reflects a broader vision of sustainable and inclusive growth that addresses both immediate socio-economic challenges and long-term development goals.

Mbabazi and Nkwatsibwe (2024) [49] elaborated that policy frameworks such as the National Strategy for Local Economic Development (NSLED) play a central role in this agenda. NSLED aims to transition Uganda into a middle-income economy by strengthening local governance structures and fostering private sector-led growth at the grassroots level. Complementing this, the Parish Development Model (PDM) seeks to institutionalize community-level engagement by promoting mindset transformation, participatory planning, and the use of localized information-sharing platforms. Through regular updates on government initiatives and community feedback mechanisms, the PDM enhances transparency, accountability, and inclusivity.

These initiatives are emerging at a time when global sustainability challenges are intensifying. Increasing pressure on natural systems poses a significant threat to life-sustaining resources, particularly in low-income and rural contexts. In Uganda, rural communities already grappling with high poverty levels are especially vulnerable (Kyohairwe *et al.*, 2024) [50]. They further emphasized that the complexity of poverty in these areas is compounded by systemic issues such as corruption and weak governance, which are widely recognized as key barriers to development. In the absence of democratic systems and transparent institutions, public trust deteriorates, and long-term development efforts are undermined.

To overcome these structural challenges, Uganda is promoting holistic and strategic development models that prioritize community empowerment, accountability, and inclusive participation. These approaches emphasize the need for a deeper understanding of the socio-ecological systems within which communities' function. Integrating sustainability principles such as back-casting, inclusive governance, and cultural sensitivity ensures that development efforts are both context-appropriate and future-oriented (Barongo & Mulegi, 2023) [51].

Ultimately, the goal is to move beyond deterministic, dependency-driven development paradigms. By fostering self-reliance, resilience, and transformational change at the local level, Uganda aims to cultivate an enabling environment for long-term, community-led development that is both sustainable and equitable (Bulhan & Elias, 2023) [52].

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study adopted a case study design, as suggested by Suwito and Rusmanto (2022)

[53], to gain an in-depth understanding of holistic transformation and its influence on community development in Eastern Uganda. Bond *et al.* (2017) [54] explained that research design is a strategic framework for data collection and analysis, therefore, the study employed a single-methods approach which is quantitative techniques. Quantitative data were collected through close-ended questionnaires (Budiyana, 2021) [55] to enable statistical analysis. The study targeted a population of 280 participants purposefully selected to capture diverse perspectives on holistic transformation and community development. The sample included district councilors, community members, cultural and religious leaders, community development officers, and representatives from community-based organizations drawn from selected districts. This broad representation ensured well-rounded insights and validation of different viewpoints. The chosen participants were considered appropriate due to their substantial knowledge and firsthand experience with holistic transformation and its impact on community development in their respective communities.

2.2. Sample Size

A sample size of 236 respondents was selected from a target population of 280 (see **Table 1**). This was determined using Slovene's formula, a widely accepted method for calculating sample size when the population size (N) and margin of error (e) are known. Mazaki (2017) [56] elaborated that Slovene's formula is commonly applied in research contexts where surveying the entire population is impractical due to constraints of time and resources. The formula is expressed as:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

In this study, a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error were adopted, as these are considered acceptable standards in social science research. The use of Slovene's formula ensured a representative sample while maintaining feasibility in data collection.

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

where:

1) Religious leaders

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(a)^2} = \frac{70}{1 + 70 \times (0.05)^2} = 59 \text{ Respondent}$$

2) District councilors

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(a)^2} = \frac{70}{1 + 70 \times (0.05)^2} = 60 \text{ Respondent}$$

3) Community members

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(a)^2} = \frac{100}{1 + 100 \times (0.05)^2} = 80 \text{ Respondent}$$

4) Cultural leaders

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(a)^2} = \frac{20}{1 + 20 \times (0.05)^2} = 19 \text{ Respondent}$$

5) CDOs

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(a)^2} = \frac{10}{1 + 10 \times (0.05)^2} = 10 \text{ Respondent}$$

6) Community-based organizations

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(a)^2} = \frac{10}{1 + 10 \times (0.05)^2} = 10 \text{ Respondent}$$

The above calculations illustrated how the sample size for each group in Eastern Uganda was determined using Slovene's formula.

Table 1. Population sample size.

Categories of respondents	Population	Sample size	Sampling techniques
Religious leaders	70	59	Simple random sampling
District councilors	70	60	Simple random sampling
Community members	100	80	Simple random sampling
Cultural leaders	20	19	Simple random sampling
CBOs	10	9	Simple random sampling
CDOs	10	9	Simple random sampling
Total respondents	280	236	Field data, 2025

Source: Government report (2022).

2.3. Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques refer to the methods used to select a subset (sample) of individuals, items, or data points from a larger population for research purposes. Since it was often impractical or impossible to study an entire population, researchers used sampling techniques to collect data efficiently while drawing valid conclusions (Mazaki, 2017) [56]. Therefore, simple random sampling was used in this study for data collection.

2.4. Data Collection Methods

The study collected primary data in Eastern Uganda using closed-ended questionnaires. Secondary data was obtained from various sources, including research articles, internet resources, library textbooks, academic journals, and published books.

Survey

Survey research was employed as a quantitative research approach in which participants responded to a standardized set of questions. According to Khanday, and

Khanam (2023) [57], surveys are particularly effective for collecting data from large populations and are well-suited for statistical analysis due to their structured nature. In this study, structured questionnaires were administered to participants as the primary data collection instrument. This method ensured both anonymity and consistency in the data collection process, minimizing researcher's bias and encouraging honest responses.

The use of standardized questions across all participants enhanced the reliability and comparability of the data. This approach was appropriate for capturing measurable variables aligned with the research objectives, allowing the researcher to systematically quantify respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, thereby facilitating meaningful analysis and interpretation of the findings.

2.5. Data Collection Instruments

Creswell and Creswell (2018) [58] define data collection tools as instruments used to gather, evaluate, and analyze information. In this study, the primary data collection tool was structured questionnaire, which facilitated a comprehensive data collection process by capturing quantitative insights.

Questionnaire

The structured questionnaire served as the primary tool for collecting quantitative data in this study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) [58] explained that structured questionnaires promote consistency across all respondents and help minimize researcher bias by standardizing the format and content of questions. This uniformity was essential for generating reliable and comparable data across different participants. To measure respondents' attitudes and perceptions related to the study objectives, the questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale. This scale allowed participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements. The scale was structured as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Participants were instructed to select the option that best represents their viewpoint. This approach ensured the quantifiability of subjective perceptions, enabling the researcher to perform statistical analysis and identify patterns in the responses. The use of a Likert scale enhanced the instrument's ability to capture nuanced opinions, making it well-suited for social science research.

2.6. Measurement of Variables

Kruschke and Liddell (2017) [59] explained that measurement involves assigning numbers to varying degrees of opinions, perceptions, and attitudes about specific variables, based on rules that define levels of measurement. In this study, the variables related to holistic transformation and community development were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. This format was adopted and modified to align with the study's specific objectives. The Likert scale technique enabled the assignment of numerical values to statements representing selected dimensions of holistic transformation, allowing for the quantification of respondents' perceptions.

The statements were derived from the literature review and reflected key aspects of the study topic.

Data collected from the Likert scale responses were analyzed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were generated, and inferential analysis was conducted using linear regression. An appropriate interpretation scale was applied to assess overall trends. The significance of the findings was determined using a standard p -value threshold of 0.05 from the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. A p -value below 0.05 indicated that holistic transformation has a statistically significant and positive influence on community development in Eastern Uganda. Conversely, a p -value above 0.05 suggested that holistic transformation is not a significant determinant of community development in the study area.

2.7. Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis involved data editing, coding, verification, and tabulation to ensure accuracy and organization (Axinn *et al.*, 2011) [60]. The questionnaires were coded according to the study variables to enrich clarity and accuracy. The analysis began with the computation of descriptive statistics, including minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation, followed by tests to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement scales.

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics, particularly correlation and regression analyses, were employed to address the study's specific objectives. Regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables and to assess the influence of holistic transformation on community development. All analyses were carried out using SPSS (Version 23.0), and the findings were presented in tables to ensure clear and accurate interpretation. This analytical approach provided both a comprehensive understanding of the data and meaningful insights into potential causal relationships.

3. Results of the study

3.1. Response Rate

The study administered a total of 236 questionnaires to respondents in Eastern Uganda, out of which 230 were efficaciously retrieved. According to Teherani *et al.* (2015) [61], response rate refers to the proportion of cases that agree to participate in a study from the original sample. In practice, researchers rarely achieve a 100% response rate due to numerous factors such as refusal to participate, ineligibility, inability to respond, or difficulties in contacting some respondents. Similarly, Khanday and Khanam (2023) [57] define response rate in survey research as the number of people who completed the survey divided by the total number of people in the sample, usually articulated as a percentage. In this study, the response rate was calculated by dividing 230 by 236, resulting in a 97.45% response rate in the selected region in Uganda namely Jinja City, Mbale City, Tororo District, So-

roti City, and Katakwi District. This high response rate was considered adequate to generate reliable findings.

Dissimilarity in response rates among different respondent categories was accredited to differences in accessibility and obtainability. For instance, some respondents were relatively busy and therefore harder to reach, while others were more easily available. As shown in **Table 2**, Religious Leaders had a response rate of 98.30%, District Councilors 98.33%, and Community Members 97.5% in Eastern Uganda. Cultural Leaders recorded a response rate of 94.73%, Community-Based Organizations 88.8%, while Community Development Officers achieved a 100% response rate in Eastern Region.

Table 2. Response rate.

Categories of respondents	Sample size	Returns	Response rate
Religious leaders	59	58	98.30%
District councilors	60	59	98.33%
Community members	80	78	97.5%
Cultural leaders	19	18	94.73%
CBOs	9	8	88.8%
CDOs	9	9	100%
Total respondents	236	230	97.45%

Source: Data analysis (2025).

3.2. Demographic Characteristics

According to Khanday and Khanam (2023) [57], demographic characteristics refer to statistical data about a population, such as age, gender, race, income, and education level. These aspects are used to describe groups of people and are indispensable for understanding population dynamics in research fields such as the social sciences. In this study, demographic analysis was predominantly significant because holistic transformation is believed to contribute positively to national development in Eastern Uganda. The researchers adopted this approach based on the assumption that demographic factors significantly influence individuals' opinions regarding their role in community development. These aspects are further discussed in the subsequent sections below.

3.2.1. Gender of Respondents

The findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents 58% are male respondents, whereas female respondents were presented by 42% in Eastern Uganda (see **Table 3**). This gender disparity reflects the general gender dynamic forces in Eastern Uganda, where men frequently have superior access to decision-making platforms than women. Subsequently, the findings of the study show that deci-

sion-making process is more influenced by male perspectives, hypothetically affecting how community development issues and holistic transformation are perceived in Eastern Uganda today.

Table 3. Gender of respondents.

Gender of respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	134	58
Female	96	42
Total	230	100

Source: Research findings (2025).

3.2.2. Age Bracket of Respondents

The findings of the study indicate that 9% of participants are in the age bracket of 50 years above, where 13% of respondents are in the age bracket of 20 - 25 years. Those who were in the age bracket of 37 - 42 were represented by 24% of respondents in Eastern Uganda. This indicates that most respondents were in their productive and economically active years. The findings further elaborate that 27% of participants are in the age bracket of 26 - 36 years in Eastern Uganda. This implies that elderly respondent's perspectives are underrepresented in promoting community development in Eastern region. Consequently, the findings of the study, particularly in the age bracket, revealed that community development is more influenced by middle-aged respondents, who are typically more involved in leadership, economic, and social transformation processes within Mbale City, Jinja City, Soroti City, Tororo District and Katakwi District (see **Figure 2**).

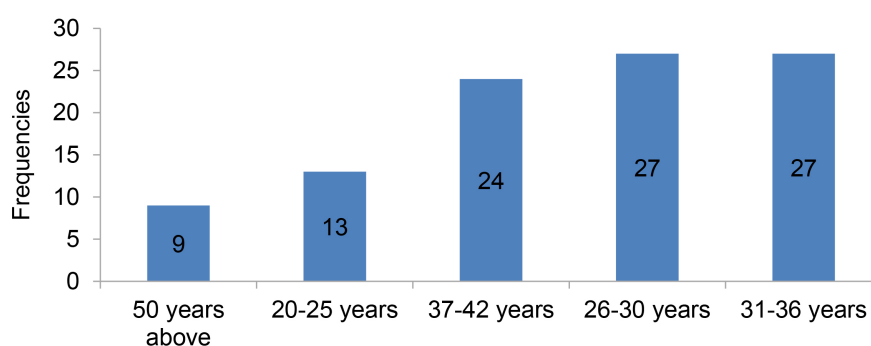


Figure 2. Age of respondents.

3.2.3. Education of Respondents

The results of study show that 43% of respondents attained bachelor's degree in Eastern Uganda and 39% of participants acquired diploma level. This advocates that respondents are prospective to have a good understanding of issues connected to community and national development, allowing them to provide informed views on holistic transformation. Furthermore, the findings indicates that 13% of respondents attended master's degree, whereas 5% of participants are PHD holders in

Eastern Uganda today. This implies a limited access to higher education opportunities in the region, emphasizing the need to fortify educational improvement to support sustainable development in the region (see **Table 4**).

Table 4. Education of respondents.

Education of respondents	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	89	39
Degree	99	43
Masters	30	13
PHD	12	5
Total	230	100

Source: Research findings (2025).

3.2.4. Religion of Respondents

The findings of the study revealed that 55% of participants are Catholics, whereas 25% of respondents are born-again Christians in Eastern Uganda. This implies that Christians, with Catholicism being the most common faith, are predominantly in Eastern Uganda today. This religious composition proposes that community values, social interactions, and development initiatives in the region are strongly influenced by Christian doctrines and church-based structures in Eastern Uganda. Those who were Muslim were represented by 20% respondents in Eastern region. The comparatively slighter percentage of Muslim respondents implies that their perspectives in holistic transformation are less represented toward community development in the contemporary Eastern Uganda. Therefore, development programs and holistic transformation determinations in Eastern Uganda need to reflect the role of religious institutions in shaping community insolences, involvement, and support for local development creativities in the region (see **Table 5**).

Table 5. Religion of respondents.

Religion of respondents	Frequency	Percent
Muslim	45	20
Born again Christian	57	25
Catholic	128	55
Total	230	100

Source: Research findings (2025).

3.3. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is the branch of statistics that uses numerical and graphical techniques to organize, summarize, and present the key features of a dataset. It relies on measures such as the mean, median, and standard deviation, as well as

visual tools like charts and graphs, to make data easier to understand without drawing conclusions about a broader population (Core Team, 2019) [62]. According to Kruschke and Liddell (2017) [59], a legend is a brief explanatory text that accompanies a figure in a report, providing all necessary details for readers to understand the figure without referring back to the main text. For this reason, the researcher used descriptive legends to enhance clarity and comprehension of the work. The findings of the study show varied levels of transformation and development across the assessed dimensions. Community development recorded a moderate level (Mean = 2.1904, SD = 0.57616), while physical transformation also reflected a moderate level (Mean = 2.5070, SD = 0.73576). In contrast, psychological transformation demonstrated a high level (Mean = 3.2174, SD = 0.86869). Similarly, spiritual transformation showed a relatively high level (Mean = 3.1748, SD = 0.67304). Furthermore, policies and culture registered a high level (Mean = 3.2017, SD = 0.84873), suggesting that these factors strongly influence community development in Eastern Uganda. The standard deviations across all variables are relatively low, indicating limited variability in responses, meaning most respondents held similar views regarding the issues measured. Supplementary analysis was piloted using linear regression to calculate the mean and standard deviation for each variable, and the results are presented in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics.

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Community development	230	1.20	3.40	2.1904	0.57616
Physical transformation	230	1.20	4.80	2.5070	0.73576
Psychology transformation	230	1.00	5.00	3.2174	0.86869
Spiritual transformation	230	1.80	4.60	3.1748	0.67304
Policies and culture	230	1.00	5.00	3.2017	0.84873
Valid N (listwise)	230				

Source: Data analysis (2025). Legend: Mean: 0.0 - 1.0: Very low level; 1.1 - 2.0: Low level; 2.1 - 3.0: Moderate level; 3.1 - 4.0: High level; 4.1 - 5.0: Very high level.

The Influence of Holistic Transformation on Community Development in Eastern Uganda

In Eastern Uganda, Community development continues to advance in response to social, economic, cultural, and spiritual dynamics that form the region. Cities and Districts such as Jinja City, Mbale City, Tororo District, Soroti City, and Katakwi District display various development patterns influenced by historical experiences, cultural practices, and local governance structures. In recent years, development specialists and intellectuals have gradually recognized that justifiable community growth cannot be achieved through economic interventions alone. Instead, it necessitates a holistic approach that addresses numerous magnitudes

of human well-being.

Holistic transformation incorporates physical, psychological and spiritual changes that enable individuals and communities to expand their quality of life. This cohesive viewpoint assumes that development is most effective when people are involved in transformation in their attitudes, behaviors, capabilities, and environments. In the context of Eastern Uganda, where communities face challenges such as poverty, cultural norms, limited infrastructure, and historical marginalization, holistic transformation plays a significant role in determining progress.

Understanding how these different measurements of transformation influence community development is crucial for designing effective interventions, reinforcing local institutions, and stimulating self-sufficiency. Therefore, this study examines the influence of holistic transformation on community development in Eastern Uganda, assessing how spiritual, psychological and physical changes contribute to improved well-being and collective growth. This analysis provides insights that can guide policymakers, development organizations, and community leaders in fostering more inclusive and sustainable development aftermaths.

The findings of the study show that physical transformation is not extensively perceived as a key driver of community development in Eastern Uganda. The results indicate that 60% of respondents are in disagreement that physical transformation contributes to community development. It implies that community members have other factors, such as economic opportunities, social services, and education, that they value more than physical or infrastructural changes. This indicates a potential incongruity between community priorities and development strategies that focus profoundly on physical transformation. The study further indicates that 29% of respondents agreed that a smaller segment of the population still recognizes the importance of physical development, signifying that such interventions have uneven visibility within the region. Those who were not certain were represented by 11% of respondents. This highlights a lack of awareness about how physical transformation contributes to community development, pointing to the need for further community engagement, sensitization, and evidence-based communication in Eastern Uganda. Largely, the implication of these findings indicates that development efforts need to be reoriented and better communicated to ensure they align with what communities perceive as most beneficial for their development. The overall mean score ($\mu = 2.40$) further advocates that physical transformation moderately influences community development in Eastern Uganda. A simple regression analysis was piloted to determine this influence. The results showed a strong positive correlation between physical transformation and community development, with a correlation coefficient of 72.8% ($p = 0.000$), indicating a statistically significant relationship. In terms of variance explained, physical transformation accounts for 53% of the variation in community development, underscoring its significant influence in the region for sustainable development (see [Table 7](#)).

Table 7. Regression model summary on physical transformation.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	0.728 ^a	0.530	0.528	0.39585	0.530	257.138	1	228	0.000

^aPredictors: (Constant), physical transformation. Source: Data analysis (2025).

Table 8 presents the results of a simple linear regression analysis examining the influence of Physical Transformation on community development in Eastern Uganda. The findings show that the constant has an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.761, with $t = 8.196$ and $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the expected value of community development is 0.761 when Physical Transformation is equal to zero, and the statistically significant intercept demonstrates that this baseline value varies significantly from zero.

Table 8. Coefficients on physical transformation.

Model		Coefficients				t	Sig.
		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			
		B	Std. error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	0.761	0.093		8.196	0.000	
	PT	0.570	0.036	0.728	16.036	0.000	

Dependent variable: Community development. Source: Data analysis (2025).

The unstandardized coefficient for Physical Transformation ($B = 0.570$) advocates that a one-unit increase in Physical Transformation is related with a 0.570-unit increase in community development, holding other factors constant. Furthermore, the standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.728) shows a strong positive influence, indicating that Physical Transformation substantially influences community development in terms of standard deviation units. A beta of 0.728 confirms that Physical Transformation is a significant predictor of social well-being in Eastern Uganda.

The large t -value ($t = 16.036$) and the highly significant p -value ($p < 0.001$) further confirm that Physical Transformation is a statistically significant predictor of social development. Overall, the regression model indicates that Physical Transformation strongly and significantly contributes to community development in Eastern Uganda. The high standardized coefficient underscores a strong positive relationship, meaning that enhancements in Physical Transformation are associated with significant increase in community development.

The findings further revealed that majority of respondents (57%) trust that psy-

chological transformation plays an imperative role in community development in Eastern Uganda. This shows that many people in the region recognize the significance of changes in mindset, attitudes, values, and behaviors as crucial drivers of community progress and sustainability. Meanwhile, 39% of respondents disagreed, designating that a substantial minority of respondents do not view psychological transformation as a main determinant. This means that they believe other factors, such as economic resources, infrastructure, governance, and education as more important. Those who were not certain regarding psychological change and development outcomes in Eastern Uganda were represented by 4% of respondents. The overall mean score ($\mu = 3.21$) further recommends that psychological transformation has a high influence on community development. The findings of the study further exposed that psychological transformation significantly influences community development in Eastern Uganda. The findings imply that psychological transformation is largely apparent as significant for community development in Eastern Uganda, but there remains considerable disagreement. A simple regression analysis (see **Table 9**) was steered to determine the influence. The results revealed a strong positive correlation between psychological transformation and community development, with a correlation coefficient of 71.0% ($p = 0.000$), signifying a statistically substantial connection. In terms of variance elucidated, psychological transformation accounts for 50.4% of the variation in community development, underscoring its significant influence in Jinja City, Mbale City, Tororo District, Soroti City and Katakwi District.

Table 9. Regression of model summary on psychological transformation.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	0.710 ^a	0.504	0.502	0.40650	0.504	232.049	1	228	0.000

^aPredictors: (Constant), psychological transformation. Source: Data analysis (2025).

A simple linear regression was conducted to examine the influence of psychological transformation on community development in Eastern Uganda. The findings discovered a significant model, with an intercept of $B = 3.706$, $p < 0.001$. This represents the predicted value of community development when psychological transformation is zero and, given its numerical significance, is expressively different from zero.

The results further showed that the unstandardized coefficient (B) for psychological transformation was -0.471 (Standard error = 0.031), despite the fact that standardized coefficient (Beta) was -0.710 , $t = -15.233$, $p < 0.001$. Although the coefficient of -0.471 indicates a negative relationship, it highlights the sensitivity of community development outcomes to changes in psychological transformation. This suggests that psychological transformation plays a meaningful role in shap-

ing community development, and that adjustments in how psychological transformation is supported could lead to improved community outcomes. The finding provides valuable insight for policymakers and practitioners to better align psychological transformation initiatives with community development goals, ensuring that personal changes translate more effectively into collective benefits.

The large negative standardized coefficient (Beta = -0.710) reveals a strong analytical effect, demonstrating that psychological transformation is a powerful predictor of community development in standardized terms. Furthermore, the results show that the predictor is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), meaning the observed effect is highly unlikely to be due to chance in the perspective of Eastern Uganda (see **Table 10**).

Table 10. Coefficients on psychological transformation.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.706	0.103	35.967	0.000
	PsT	-0.471	0.031	-0.710	-15.233

Dependent variable: DV. Source: Data analysis (2025).

The study further indicates that half of the respondents (50%) believe that spiritual transformation contributes positively to community development in Eastern Uganda. This shows that spiritual values, beliefs, religious practices, and moral guidance are viewed as factors that influence social cohesion, ethical behavior, peacebuilding, and collective community progress. However, 32% of respondents disagreed. This observation indicates that a significant percentage of the population in Eastern Uganda does not realize spiritual transformation as a key driver of development. This reflects differences in personal beliefs, religious backgrounds and the perception that practical socio-economic factors are more central to development than spiritual or moral changes.

The findings further elaborate that 18% of respondents were uncertain regarding the influence of spiritual transformation. This group of people has not seen clear evidence of spirituality contributing to tangible development outcomes in the community.

The findings imply that while spiritual transformation holds meaningful influence for many community members, it is not entirely recognized as a major determinant of development. Therefore, development programs in Eastern Uganda need to balance values-based approaches with more practical, socio-economic interventions for sustainable development in the region.

The overall mean score ($\mu = 3.17$) further recommends that spiritual transformation has a high influence on community development. The findings of the study further exposed that spiritual transformation significantly influences community

development in Eastern Uganda. A simple regression analysis was navigated to determine the influence of spiritual transformation and findings show a strong positive correlation between spiritual transformation and community development, with a correlation coefficient of 78.3% ($p = 0.000$), indicating a statistically substantial connection. In terms of variance clarified, spiritual transformation accounts for 61.3% of the variation in community development, underscoring its significant influence in Eastern region (see **Table 11**).

Table 11. Regression model summary on spiritual transformation.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	0.783 ^a	0.613	0.611	0.35939	0.613	360.554	1	228	0.000

^aPredictors: (Constant), spiritual transformation. Source: Data analysis (2025).

Table 12. Coefficients on spiritual transformation.

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.063	0.115		0.552	0.581
	SP	0.670	0.035	0.783	18.988	0.000

Dependent variable: DV. Source: Data analysis (2025).

A simple linear regression was conducted to scrutinize the influence of spiritual transformation on community development. The results of the model indicate that the Constant $B = 0.063$, $SE = 0.115$ and $t = 0.552$, $p = 0.581$. The findings show that p -value (0.581) is greater than 0.05, and the intercept is statistically significant. The results further show that Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.670, Standard Error = 0.035 and Standardized Coefficient (Beta) = 0.783 while $t = 18.988$, $p < 0.001$. The coefficient $B = 0.670$ indicates that for every one-unit increase in Spiritual transformation, increases by 0.670 units, holding other factors constant. This is a positive relationship, which means that higher levels of Spiritual transformation are associated with higher values of community development. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.783) further shows that Spiritual transformation has a strong positive effect on community development in standardized terms, making it a powerful predictor. The very high t -value (18.988) and the highly significant p -value ($p < 0.001$) indicate that Spiritual transformation is statistically significant contributors on community development in Eastern Uganda (see **Table 12**).

The findings show a divided perception among respondents concerning the role of government policies and culture in influencing community development

in Eastern Uganda. The study indicates that 50% of participants disagree that government policies and culture are significant determinants, it advocates that many community members feel that government policies and cultural norms have limited direct impact on development outcomes. This reflects discontent with policy implementation, lack of awareness of prevailing policies in Eastern Uganda. At the same time, 47% of respondents agreed that government policies and cultural factors do influence the speed of community development. This indicates that nearly half of the population recognizes the importance of governance, cultural practices, and policy frameworks in shaping development processes, whereas 3% of respondents were uncertain whether government actions and cultural contexts shape development in Eastern Uganda. The overall mean score ($\mu = 2.92$) further endorses that government policies and cultural norms have a moderate influence on community development. The findings of the study further show that government policies and cultural norms are significantly weak to influence community development in Eastern Uganda. The findings suggest that government policies and cultural norms are largely deceptive as significant for community development in Eastern Uganda. A simple regression analysis was navigated to determine the influence. The results reveal a strong positive correlation between government policies and cultural norms and community development, with a correlation coefficient of 67.4% ($p = 0.000$), signifying a statistically substantial connection. In terms of variance explained that government policies and cultural norms accounts for 45.4% of the variation in community development, underscoring its significant influence in Jinja City, Mbale City, Tororo District, Soroti City and Katakwi District (see **Table 13**).

Table 13. Regression model summary on government policies and cultural norms.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	0.674 ^a	0.454	0.451	0.42675	0.454	189.426	1	228	0.000

^aPredictors: (Constant), GPC. Source: Data analysis (2025).

A simple linear regression also shows that government policies and cultural norms are significant models, with an intercept of $B = 3.655$, $p < 0.001$. The results further showed that the unstandardized coefficient (B) for government policies and cultural norms was -0.457 with standard error = 0.033, despite the fact that standardized coefficient (Beta) was -0.674 , $t = -13.763$, $p < 0.001$. The coefficient of -0.457 indicates that for every one-unit increase in government policies and cultural norms, decreases in community development by 0.457 units, holding other factors constant. This confirms a negative relationship, meaning higher government policies and cultural norms scores are related to lower community development outcomes (see **Table 14**).

Table 14. Coefficients on government policies and cultural norms.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.655	0.110	33.211	0.000	
	GPC	-0.457	0.033	-0.674	-13.763	0.000

Dependent variable: DV. Source: Data analysis (2025).

In summary, the findings reveal that holistic transformation is a strong and significant determinant of community development, as evidenced by 46% of respondents who agreed with this position in Eastern Uganda. This proposes that significant community development in Eastern Uganda is best achieved through comprehensive, multi-dimensional styles that incorporate social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects, rather than through isolated interventions. Conversely, the study shows that government policies and cultural norms, although acknowledged as relevant, apply only a weak influence on community development in the region. This is reflected in the responses of 50% of participants, who indicated that these factors do not significantly shape or drive development outcomes. This implies that while policies and cultural practices exist, they are not effectively implemented, enforced, with community needs, thereby limiting their impact on sustainable development (see [Table 15](#)).

Table 15. Holistic transformation and government policies and cultural norms.

Likert scale	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	St. D
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Physical transformation	80	35	58	25	26	11	26	12	40	17	2.40	1.300
Psychological transformation	51	22	40	17	8	4	73	32	58	25	3.21	1.420
Spiritual transformation	32	14	42	18	40	18	84	36	32	14	3.17	1.119
Government policies and culture	65	28	51	22	6	3	54	24	54	23	2.92	1.591

Source: Data analysis (2025).

The regression model summary of the study reveals a strong positive correlation between holistic transformation and community development, with a correlation coefficient of 86.3% ($p = 0.000$), signifying a statistically significant connection. In terms of variance explained, holistic transformation accounts for 74.4% of the variation in community development, underscoring its significant influence in Eastern Uganda (see [Table 16](#)).

Table 16. Regression model summary on holistic transformation.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	0.863 ^a	0.744	0.741	0.29332	0.744	219.188	3	226	0.000

^aPredictors: (Constant), SP, PsT, PT. Source: Data analysis (2025).

The result of the ANOVA shows that the regression model was significant, $F(3, 226) = 219.188$, $p < 0.001$, signifying that Physical, Psychological and Spiritual transformation together have a statistically significant influence on community development in Eastern Uganda. The model accounts for approximately 74.4% of the variance in the dependent variable, indicating a strong predictive relationship between holistic transformation and community development in Jinja City, Mbale City, Tororo District, Soroti City and Katakwi District (see **Table 17**).

Table 17. Anova on holistic transformation.

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	56.575	3	18.858	219.188	0.000 ^a
	Residual	19.444	226	0.086		
	Total	76.019	229			

Dependent variable: Community development; ^aPredictors: (Constant), physical, psychological and spiritual transformation. Source: Data analysis (2025).

The findings disclose that the regression model has a statistically significant intercept ($B = 1.068$, $p < 0.001$). This designates that when Physical, Psychological, and Spiritual transformation are all equal to zero, the predicted level of community development is 1.068 in Eastern Uganda.

Results further display that Physical transformation has a positive and statistically significant influence on community development. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.183$) advocates that for every one-unit increase in Physical transformation, community development increases by 0.183 units, holding Psychological and Spiritual transformation constant. The standardized beta value ($\beta = 0.234$) shows a moderate positive influence relative to the other predictors. The influence is statistically significant ($t = 4.671$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that Physical transformation is a significant positive predictor of community development in Eastern Uganda.

In contrast, Psychological transformation proves a negative relationship with community development. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.192$) indicates that a one-unit increase in Psychological transformation results in a 0.192-unit decrease in community development, controlling for the other variables. The stand-

ardized beta ($\beta = -0.289$) displays that this is moderately strong negative influence, and in magnitude, it is stronger than the influence of Physical transformation. This predictor is statistically significant as well ($t = -6.202, p < 0.001$), signifying that higher levels of Psychological transformation are associated with reduced community development in Eastern Uganda.

The results also show that Spiritual transformation applies the strongest positive influence among all predictors. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.403$) means that each one-unit increase in Spiritual transformation leads to a 0.403-unit increase in community development when other factors are held constant. The standardized beta ($\beta = 0.471$) approves that this predictor has the highest positive impact. The influence is highly significant ($t = 10.476, p < 0.001$), validating that Spiritual transformation is a key driver of community development in Eastern Uganda. The findings show that all three predictors, Physical, Psychological, and Spiritual transformation, significantly contribute to explaining variations in community development (all $p < 0.001$). However, their influence varies in direction and magnitude, with Spiritual transformation emerging as the strongest positive predictor in Community development in Eastern Uganda (see **Table 18**).

Table 18. Coefficients on holistic transformation.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.068	0.200		5.347	0.000
1 Physical transformation	0.183	0.039	0.234	4.671	0.000
Psychological transformation	-0.192	0.031	-0.289	-6.202	0.000
Spiritual transformation	0.403	0.038	0.471	10.476	0.000

Dependent variable: Community development. Source: Data analysis (2025).

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, holistic transformation has emerged as a vital driver of sustainable community development in Eastern Uganda. By addressing the interconnected dimensions of human well-being, social, economic, cultural, environmental, and spiritual, it fosters development that is both comprehensive and enduring. Evidence from community initiatives in the region demonstrates that development efforts integrating education, healthcare, livelihood improvement, cultural identity, and social cohesion tend to yield stronger and more sustainable outcomes than single-sector interventions.

A holistic approach enhances local capacities by empowering individuals and groups with relevant knowledge, practical skills, and a strong sense of agency. This empowerment promotes active community participation in decision-making and resource management, thereby strengthening accountability and local ownership

of development processes. Furthermore, holistic transformation advances gender inclusion, youth engagement, and the recognition of indigenous knowledge, factors that collectively enhance community resilience and adaptability in the face of persistent challenges such as poverty, climate variability, and social inequality.

Holistic development also promotes social cohesion by reinforcing shared values and collective responsibility. When spiritual and cultural dimensions are integrated alongside economic and infrastructural priorities, communities develop stronger social networks that support collective action that promotes development. Such cohesion accelerates development initiatives and enhances their sustainability, as community members become connected not only to the tangible benefits but also to the underlying vision and purpose of development efforts.

Significantly, the findings demonstrate that government policies and cultural structures utilize a relatively weak influence on community development, highlighting substantial practical implications for governance and community engagement. This suggests gaps in policy implementation and weak alignment between governance frameworks and community priorities. To address this, there is a need for governments to strengthen participatory policy formulation and implementation mechanisms that actively engage communities at all stages of development planning. Enhancing coordination between local government structures, cultural institutions, and community actors may improve policy relevance, ownership, and effectiveness. Additionally, integrating culturally responsive approaches into governance processes can help bridge the gap between formal policy frameworks and grassroots development needs.

In summary, holistic transformation significantly enhances community development in Eastern Uganda by promoting inclusive growth, strengthening human capacity, and nurturing resilient social systems. It offers a framework in which development is measured not only by economic indicators but also by improvements in quality of life, dignity, social cohesion, and collective well-being. Embracing this multi-dimensional approach while strengthening policy implementation and governance-community alignment remains essential for achieving long-term, sustainable, and community-driven development in Eastern Uganda.

5. Limitations

Holistic transformation initiatives in Eastern Uganda are constrained by several interrelated structural, financial, socio-cultural, infrastructural, and environmental challenges. One of the major limitations is the weak institutional capacity of local governance structures and community-based organizations. Many district councils and grassroots institutions lack adequate technical skills, financial resources, and effective coordination mechanisms necessary to plan, implement, and sustain integrated development initiatives. As a result, holistic transformation efforts often suffer from poor leadership, weak monitoring systems, and limited long-term impact.

Closely linked to institutional weaknesses is the problem of inadequate and un-

stable funding. Holistic transformation requires sustained financial investment across multiple sectors, including education, health, infrastructure development, livelihood improvement, and environmental protection. However, government allocations are often insufficient, while external donor funding tends to be unpredictable and largely short-term in nature. This overreliance on project-based funding undermines continuity, scalability, and sustainability of holistic community development programs.

In addition, socio-cultural barriers significantly limit the adoption of transformative practices. Deeply rooted cultural norms and traditions, such as resistance to gender equality initiatives and traditional land inheritance systems, often hinder inclusive participation and equitable resource distribution. Furthermore, suspicion toward externally driven development models can reduce community trust and ownership. These factors collectively slow behavioral change and weaken community engagement, which is essential for holistic transformation.

The underdevelopment of critical infrastructure further constrains transformation progress. Many parts of Eastern Uganda face poor road networks, limited access to electricity, inadequate clean water supply, and poorly developed market systems. Without this essential infrastructure, improvements in education delivery, healthcare access, and economic productivity remain limited, thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of holistic development efforts.

Environmental and climatic challenges also pose significant limitations. Eastern Uganda is increasingly affected by soil degradation, prolonged droughts, and recurrent flooding, which weaken agricultural productivity, the main source of livelihood for many households. These environmental stresses increase the vulnerability of already poor communities and strain efforts aimed at building resilience and sustainable livelihoods. Climate variability therefore undermines the long-term success of holistic transformation initiatives by exacerbating poverty and food insecurity.

6. Recommendations

After analyzing the research data of the study, the researcher acknowledged key areas that necessitate helpfulness and development. In response, a set of recommendations has been developed to encourage more effective and comprehensive community development. These recommendations aim to guide local leaders, organizations, and stakeholders in creating programs and creativities that reinforce community engagement, improve resources, and support long-term development efforts.

The researcher further observed that since spiritual transformation showed the strongest positive influence on community development, district leaders, faith-based organizations, and NGOs should integrate spiritual empowerment programs into community mobilization activities and support interfaith platforms that enrich collective community action.

The researcher recommended that the national and the local government in East-

ern Uganda should Stimulate Physical Transformation through Infrastructure and Livelihood Programs by expanding access to clean water, housing improvement programs, health facilities, and community roads and maintaining infrastructure to ensure sustainability.

The findings further recommend that since psychological transformation showed a statistically significant negative influence, stakeholders in Eastern should fortify psychosocial support systems, especially in areas affected by poverty, conflict, and trauma, in order to promote positive mindsets and reduce attitudes that hinder development in the community. Based on the findings, the investigator, district development planners in Jinja, Mbale, Tororo, Soroti, and Katakwi should incorporate spiritual, physical, and psychological transformation indicators in annual planning and evaluation tools in order to strengthen education, health, community-based services, and religious institutions to work together for sustainable development.

The researcher further recommends that the government of Uganda should enhance Capacity-Building for Local Leaders through Training programs for community leaders, local councils, and NGOs to incorporate modules on holistic transformation and its role in community development.

7. Suggestion for Further Studies

Based on the findings and recommendations of the study, the researcher made the following suggestions for further studies in Eastern Uganda.

The impact of psychological transformation on community development in a different region in Uganda.

Compare Eastern Uganda with Northern, Western, or Central Uganda to determine whether holistic transformation influences development differently across regions.

Examine whether men and women experience physical, psychological, and spiritual transformation differently and how this affects development outcomes.

Investigate how cultural norms, belief systems, rituals, and traditional leadership structures affect holistic transformation and community development.

Evaluate specific interventions by churches, mosques, NGOs, and CBOs to determine which holistic approaches produce the strongest development outcomes.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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