Beneficiaries’ attitudes towards resources withdrawal for selected donor-funded agriculture-related projects in Tanzania: A social cognitive theory perspective

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 19 February 2022
Received in rev. form 16 April 2022
Accepted 22 April 2022

Keywords:
Withdrawal, attitude, sustainability, self-efficacy, outcome expectancies.

JEL Classification:
O13, O22, Q01

ABSTRACT

The study, using a comparative case study design, explored the attitude of local direct beneficiaries concerning the cessation of resources for two donor-funded agriculture-related projects in Tanzania from a Social Cognitive Theory perspective. Using a 5-point Likert Scale, data from 274 respondents were collected and analysed. Before data analysis, validity and reliability tests were performed and determined to be good. Descriptive statistics including percentages and frequencies were done. Additionally, a chi-square test was done to establish the association between variables. The findings show that local beneficiaries with higher self-efficacy and wider outcome expectancies had a positive attitude as opposed to their counterparts. Also, a positive significant relationship existed between self-efficacy and attitude (P<0.01) and between outcome expectancies and attitudes (P<0.05). Equipping local beneficiaries with the competencies needed to solve problems on their own and the continued functioning of VBAAs can aid local beneficiaries in maintaining a positive attitude post-project resources withdrawal. The study recommends that a transition phase is critical for project implementers to solidify benefits and benefit-enhancing behaviours. Also promoting community-based extension services by institutionalising VBAAs within the LGAs should be given a priority for enhancing sustainability.

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Introduction

Resource withdrawal is an indispensable stage for donor-funded projects. According to Davis and Sankar (2006), project resource withdrawal (also known as project closure or exit) refers to the removal of all externally provided financial, material and technical resources from a project area. In this study, the term withdraw is operationalized as the cessation of externally provided resources for two projects funded by the European Union (EU) and the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) was implemented in Namtumbo district between 2015 and 2018 and the ECO-Adaptation to Climate Change in Central Tanzania (ECO – ACT) was implemented in Chamwino district between 2015 and 2019. While the ISFM project dealt with activities related to the agriculture sector only, the ECO–ACT project adopted a holistic approach; covering livestock, water, natural resources and forestry, energy and agriculture sectors.

This study is focused on agriculture-related project activities only. The ISFM project aimed to increase and sustain crop productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers while the ECO–ACT project aimed to increase the capacity of local community beneficiaries to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and reduce poverty.

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https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i3.1710
The project resources withdrawal signifies the transfer of project leadership, activities and outcomes from external partners to local management (Lee, 2017; Ruiz-Miranda et al., 2020). In most cases, the transfer causes negative feelings and discomfort among local beneficiaries and organisations (Davis & Sankar, 2006). This is because, the act of project resource withdrawal arouses feelings of desertedness, loss of capacity building opportunities and the platform for learning and exchange of ideas (INTRAC, 2012). The situation worsens when the local partners or local organisations assuming leadership responsibilities suffer from limited financial, managerial, and/or technical capacities to take off and a limited understanding of what the withdrawal will entail (Rogers & Macias, 2004; INTRAC, 2012). Similarly, when the intended changes are not consolidated yet, the withdrawal results in reduced capacity of local direct beneficiaries and project sustainability (Ruiz-Miranda et al., 2020), which according to Gulali (2018), is much bigger in Africa than in the other regions of the developing world. Gulali, (2018) shows that over the past 30 years, the World Bank-supported projects in Africa had a failure rate of 50% while the rest of the regions forming the developing counties had a 40% failure rate. Country-wise, donor-funded projects are similarly reported to be unsustainable once donor resources are withdrawn; specifically, in the agriculture sector. Examples include Zambia (see, Lungo et al., 2017), Kenya (Ndombi, et al., 2020), Cameroon (Mulah, 2019), and Malawi (Hofs, 2013). The consequences of project resource withdrawal in the agriculture sector are also visible in Tanzania. The sector has been receiving donors’ support through local non-governmental organizations or government specialized institutions or departments in the form of programmes or stand-alone projects for over five decades. Nonetheless, the sustainability of agricultural sector projects in the country remains questionable (Mkomagi et al., 2013; Mlaje, 2014; Mjema, 2017).

In the efforts to realise positive and sustainable outcomes of donor-funded projects, the consequences of project withdrawal should not be ignored. Empirical attempts have been made to address the challenge of projects’ unsustainability. The focus has mainly been on the promulgation of exit strategies (Levinger & McLeod, 2002; Lee, 2017) and a framework for designing and implementing exit strategies (Levinger & McLeod, 2002). However, one issue that has eluded scientific studies in project management is the effects of project resources withdrawal on the attitudes of local beneficiaries. Minimal empirical research (Oludije, 2008; Khanpae, 2020) exists on local beneficiaries’ attitudes and the sustainability of development projects. However, how project resource withdrawal affects the attitude of local beneficiaries remains empirically unexplored.

This study, therefore, explored the effects of project resource withdrawal on the attitudes of local beneficiaries. The question that arouses research interest is, what is the attitude of local beneficiaries following the withdrawal of resources for a donor-funded project? The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) provided the foundation for the empirical exploration of the effects of withdrawal on the attitudes of local beneficiaries. Although various behavioural theories (eg. Theory of Planned Behaviour, Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Theory of Reasoned Action, Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) can be used to explore attitudes, this study considered SCT most relevant because it provides explanations about both attitudes as well as the necessary conditions for sustaining attitude using the concepts of self-efficacy (SE) and outcome expectancies (OEs). SE represents a person’s self-confidence in their ability to solve challenges or accomplish tasks to attain particular personal or social objectives whereas outcome expectancies refer to a person’s judgement about the likelihood of the behaviour (Bandura, 1997; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Furthermore, the SCT was used to establish the study’s hypotheses on the association between SE and attitude and between OEs and attitude. The conceptual hypothesis is (H₀): There is no association between SE and local beneficiaries’ attitudes towards project resource withdrawal. The operational hypothesis is (H₀): Local beneficiaries with a high SE are not more likely to report a positive attitude than their counterparts. Regarding outcome expectancies, the conceptual hypothesis is (H₀): There is no association between OEs and local beneficiaries’ attitudes towards project resource withdrawal. The operational hypothesis is (H₀): Local beneficiaries with wider access to support services are not more likely to report a positive attitude than their counterparts. Following the literature review, the rest of the paper is organised: methodology, results and discussion, and finally, conclusions.

**Literature Review**

**Theoretical and Foundation**

According to the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997; 2001), SE and OEs determine behaviour performance. Self-efficacy is argued to influence the way people expend efforts and perseverance or get discouraged and give up, do tasks or address challenges, either individually or collectively (Bandura, 1997; Gallagher, 2012; Chowdhury, 2021). A person with high self-efficacy is more likely to be self-assured and see failures as opportunities to try again and work well in a team (Chowdhury, 2021). Outcome expectancies compel an individual to consider both the probability of an outcome and its relative value when deciding whether or not to act (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

The SCT posits that everyone is knowledgeable and capable of being successful if exposed to relevant opportunities to achieve their goals (Gallagher, 2012). However, the theory acknowledges that there are limits to what people can achieve individually or collectively; hence, the need for them to link and harness the abilities of other stakeholders (Bandura, 1997). Thus, in the context of this study, SCT provided a lens for exploring if local beneficiaries having high SE will persevere emerging challenges and remain positive to project resource withdrawal while those having low SE will give up and form a negative attitude. Furthermore, to explore if local beneficiaries with wider OEs will develop a more positive attitude than their counterparts. In terms of sustainability, to explore if local beneficiaries with a positive attitude will hold that even without the project resources, they could still go on to pursue development endeavours.
Attitude is one of the concepts with a multitude and competing definitions (Chaiklin, 2011). According to Chawla and Sondhi (2011), attitude is a lasting disposition to respond steadily in a specified manner to various facets of the world, including people, events and objects. Since this study adopts the psychological approach to behaviour change, this definition was considered relevant. Frymier & Nadler (2017) posit that attitude influences behaviour. People who have a positive attitude toward an attitude object, which in this study is the withdrawal of project resources, are more likely to have positive behavioural responses to that attitude object (Ajzen, 1988; 1991). Hence, in this study, the attitude of local beneficiaries was assumed to be positive until the period of disengagement. This is because, as Lacy et al. (2009) point out that when local beneficiaries participate in a project, they begin to identify positively with it and become proactive in achieving its goals. Previous studies have addressed attitude in project management discourse, more specifically in the agriculture sector covering a wide range of themes as depicted in Table 1. However, none of such studies has examined the local beneficiaries’ attitude in the context of project withdrawal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Main theme</th>
<th>Key findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ogunsumi (2011)</td>
<td>Farmers’ attitudes towards improved agricultural technologies</td>
<td>The level of positive attitude was higher among improved technology sustained users than abandoned users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’shea et al. (2018)</td>
<td>Farmers’ adoption decisions and attitudes</td>
<td>Attitude affects the adoption decision of farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Farmer’s attitudes and ecosystem services</td>
<td>Depending on the wider system of education, land management and incentives produced by social, economic and institutional environments, farmers’ attitudes toward ecosystem services can affect agricultural environment quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bello et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Rural youth attitudes towards agriculture</td>
<td>The cost of production affected the youth’s attitude and their decisions about agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khanpae et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Farmers’ attitude towards sustainability of wastewater irrigated farms</td>
<td>The psychological support of farmers and consideration of the real implications of wastewater resources on humans and the environment is required for the long-term adoption of wastewater usage programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuang et al. (2020)</td>
<td>How knowledge and attitude influence the adoption of smart agriculture technologies</td>
<td>Knowledge about smart agriculture, perceived importance, and adoption behaviour all have significant and positive correlations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakoya et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Knowledge and attitude towards sustainable land management practices</td>
<td>Most respondents reported a neutral attitude due to low knowledge about the benefits/damages of certain land management practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptual Framework

Behavioural change can be examined using either psychological or behavioural approaches. The psychological approach holds that for behaviours to change, attitudes must first change; however, the behaviourist approach focuses on changing the consequences of behaviour first (Chaiklin, 2011). This study opted for the psychological approach. As project resources are withdrawn, local beneficiaries remain and carry on with the development initiatives on their own.

The efforts to continue engaging in the project-initiated activities are mediated by the level of self-efficacy and outcome expectancies one has. Individual beneficiaries with high self-efficacy and outcome expectancies would exhibit high, sustained efforts that will result in a positive attitude towards the withdrawal of project resources and vice versa (see, Figure 1). At the same time, a positive attitude will reinforce high self-efficacy and outcome expectancies and vice versa. Here, self-efficacy refers to the perceived beliefs of local beneficiaries regarding their competencies to effectively continue engaging with project activities, even after the withdrawal of the project resources. Outcome expectancies refer to the perceived judgement of the same about their access to vital support services; notably, improved seeds, market and farm contact by government agricultural extension workers. Access to these services motivates continued engagement and commitment to project activities and the sustenance of a positive attitude among local beneficiaries.
Research and Methodology

Study Design, Area and Sampling Approach

The study used a comparative case study design and mixed methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The study took place and involved projects that supported local beneficiaries in Namtumbo and Chamwino Districts. The study projects were chosen because they were donor-funded, and all had been concluded following more or less the same exit strategies. For instance, linking supported local beneficiaries to local government authorities, involving government extension workers at the village, ward and district levels in their core enterprises, training local beneficiaries, establishing community seed production systems, and forming or strengthening farmers’ groups.

The study respondents were drawn from five villages; namely: Mtakanini, Nahoro, Mawa and Mchomoro (ISFM project) and Idifu village (ECO–ACT project). Based on the formula by Kothari (2004), 274 respondents out of 958 (151 for ISFM and 123 for the ECO–ACT project) were sampled.

Data Collection Instruments

An attitudinal Likert Scale, comprising of statements about self-efficacy and outcome expectancies was used to determine whether the study respondents considered the project resource withdrawal as something positive. Also, the scale was used to determine the relationship between SE and attitude, and between OEs and attitude. The scale comprised 28 items; 18 items related to self-efficacy and 10 items related to outcome expectancies.

The self-efficacy items inquired whether the respondents (i) had sustained their interests in the project supported key enterprises, (ii) had a strong commitment to the project supported key enterprises (iii) were capable of solving on own emerging challenges related to project supported key enterprises (iv) considered himself or herself capable of working independently of donor support and (v) still needed further project support. Items about outcome expectancies inquired whether the respondent accessed (i) agriculture markets for project supported crops (ii) improved inputs and, (iii) if had regular contacts with government extension officers. However, a distinction for the project-specific supported crops was made - maize, soybeans and improved cassava for the ISFM project and improved sorghum, pearl millet and sunflower for the ECO–ACT project.

Three Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) comprising six members (three males and three females) were conducted with representatives of local beneficiaries at Idifu, Mawa and Mchomoro villages. Also, seven Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were physically conducted with the study project managers, District Agriculture, Irrigation and Cooperative officers (DAICOs) for Chamwino and Namtumbo, Idifu Ward Extension Worker, a representative of CARITAS, Songea and Chamwino District representative in charge of agriculture.

Development and Validation of the Instrument

Similar to Hair et al. (2019) the development and validation of scales for the measurement of attitude were carried through four distinct stages. First, a literature review was conducted to gain an understanding of how to measure attitude and its operationalization in this study. Following that review, a preliminary list of Likert items was constructed. Second, face validation was performed through consultation with five psychometry experts to evaluate the relevance of constructed items in terms of the relationship with project resource withdrawal, readability, clarity, conciseness, omissions and adequacy. This procedure ruled out the possibility of measure...
contamination - which according to Nenty (2009) occurs when items unrelated to the construct or variable are included in the instrument.

The comments from experts were evaluated and accommodated, accordingly. Third, semantic validation was done by conducting a pilot study. The pilot study involved 24 study respondents, at Idifu village, to gauge the effectiveness of the tool. Fourth, the tool's reliability was statistically validated by computing the composite reliability, which came out to be 0.983889. The composite reliability test was preferred because, it is more reliable than the Cronbach alfa, and does not rely on the scale's number of items. Furthermore, whereas Cronbach's alpha considers all indications to be equally weighted, composite reliability weights individual indicators (Hair et al., 2019). Convergent and discriminant validity tests were also conducted, with results of 0.685656 and 0.828043, respectively. The coefficient values obtained for composite reliability and convergent validity were higher than the recommended minimum value of 0.7 (for composite reliability) and 0.5 (for convergent validity) (Hair, 2019), evidencing satisfactory levels of reliability and validity.

Analysis and Findings

Quantitative data were cleaned in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to make them amenable for analysis. All negatively worded statements in the tool were reverse coded before replacing their positive counterparts. Then, indexes for attitudes, self-efficacy and outcome expectancies were developed by summing up scores for all responses indicating strong agreement, agreement, neutral, disagreement and strong disagreement for the same. Thereafter, the indexed values were arranged in ascending order before calculating their median value. All responses falling below, within and above the median were represented by 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

The value 1 (one) represented negative attitude/low self-efficacy/limited outcome expectancies, the value 2 (two) represented impartiality while value 3 (three) represented positive attitude/high self-efficacy/wider outcome expectancies. Then, the frequencies and percentages for each of the above-identified categories were calculated. Finally, a chi-square test for independence was performed to test for the association and strength of hypothesized variables.

The contingency coefficient static (C) was used to determine the strength of correlations among variables because the number of rows and columns for each of the variables evaluated was equally three. The tests for composite, convergent, and discriminant reliability were calculated using the Microsoft Excel software programme. Qualitative data from FGDs and KIIs were transcribed into scripts, then translated from Kiswahili to English, followed by thematic analysis, based on the inductive latent approach (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Results

Local Beneficiaries’ Attitude towards the Withdrawal of Donor-funded Project Resources

The findings (Table 2) show that respondents reported a slightly negative attitude (48.7% versus 46.8%). At the project level, respondents with a negative attitude were slightly lower for the ISFM project (47.7%) than the ECO – ACT project (49.7%). The findings indicate a declined capability of local beneficiaries to persevere emerging challenges and to access vital support services, which in turn, affected their attitudes from positive to negative, for almost half of the local beneficiaries. Consistent with the argument by Oludije (2008) that a negative attitude affects participation in project activities, further quantitative results show a decline in the average number of the project supported crops grown before and after project exit, from 2.28 to 1.74 (28.0%) for the ISFM and ECO – ACT projects, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Impartial</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISFM (n = 151)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impartial</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISFM (n = 151)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Impartial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Impartial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISFM (n = 151)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>68(45.0)</td>
<td>8(5.3)</td>
<td>75(49.7)</td>
<td>73(48.3)</td>
<td>17(11.3)</td>
<td>61(40.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impartial</td>
<td>61(49.6)</td>
<td>4(3.3)</td>
<td>58(47.2)</td>
<td>58(47.2)</td>
<td>9(7.3)</td>
<td>56(45.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>129(84.7)</td>
<td>12(4.3)</td>
<td>133(48.5)</td>
<td>131(47.8)</td>
<td>10(9.3)</td>
<td>117(43.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome expectancies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Impartial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>68(45.0)</td>
<td>8(5.3)</td>
<td>75(49.7)</td>
<td>73(48.3)</td>
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<td>117(43.0)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s computation.

The observed differences in attitudes between respondents for the ISMF and ECO- ACT could be explained by socio-cultural differences. Experience shows that the natives of Chamwino District have been among the main and regular recipients of government food aid due to chronic food insecurity. For example, between 2009 and 2014 the tonnes of food received by food-insecure households in the district were 93.8 (2009/10), 25 (2010/11), 53.8 (2011/12), 69 (2012/13), and 10 (2013/14). More specifically, the tonnes of food received at Idifu village in the same time was 30.8(2009/10), 18(2010/11), 40.8(2011/12), 26(2012/13) and 26(2013/14)
(Assenga & Kayunze, 2016). This in the long run may have inculcated a dependency mindset and reduced self-help spirit. Furthermore, the design of the ECO–ACT project did not consider having a local project implementation partner and Village Based Agriculture Advisors (VBAs), who could continue offering advisory services for the project.

The findings of this study have a practical implication for the long-term sustainability of the study projects if the factors leading to the formation of negative attitudes are not addressed. As argued by Tuckman (1999), we should not expect local beneficiaries with a negative attitude to continue with initiatives promoted by the projects for lack of the drive and energy to do so. The findings suggest the need for more concerted efforts to create conditions through which local beneficiaries would be able to maintain a positive attitude and continue doing project-initiated activities after project resources withdrawal. The aim is to ensure the efficient use of project resources and the development of self-help spirit among local beneficiaries, allowing few available developments aid assistance to be directed to other needy areas and avoiding newly emerging projects from becoming similarly unsustainable. Donor-funded projects will then work as accelerators for social and economic growth rather than as a source of unending reliance.

Self-efficacy (SE)

The results (Table 1) show that local beneficiaries reported a slightly higher SE (48.5% versus 47.3%). At the project level, ISFM project local beneficiaries reported a slightly higher SE (49.7%) than the ECO – ACT project (47.2%). High SE means local beneficiaries had maintained interests in doing the project-initiated activities, developed a greater commitment to those activities, were capable of solving challenges related to farming on their own, and no longer needed donor support. Self-efficacy issues also emerged in qualitative results. It was revealed through FGD that farmer groups, primary cooperative societies and Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS) were used as platforms for promoting access to farm inputs and markets by the ISFM project local beneficiaries. In addition, CARITAS, a local project implementing partner stationed at Songea town, continued to play an advisory and mediating role in fund management and input supplies for groups organised in form of SILC (saving and internal lending communities). The groups were formed during project engagement. These findings imply that the continued functioning of institutions established by the ISFM project promoted the SE of local beneficiaries, suggesting the need for strengthening the same during project transition.

For the ECO–ACT project, FGD participants believed that the project's resources being withheld caused farmers' groups to function poorly. The groups were formed based on mutual understanding and farming interests under the guidance of the project. Up to the point of data collection, none of these was functional for lack of supervision, as summed up by one participant of the FGD:

“We were left immature. We still needed to be nurtured” (FGD, Idifu Village, 21/01/2021).

Consistent with Chowdhury (2021), the collapse of farmers’ groups and the desire for continued project support indicates low SE and the predominance of the dependence mindset among the local beneficiaries supported by the ECO–ACT project. These findings are consistent with the Social Cognitive Theory which posits that people with low SE are more likely to become “self-diagnostic” and capitalize on their inadequacies, which eventually detracts them from their efforts to assess and find solutions for problems faced (Maddux, 2012). Similarly, Perry & Davenport (2020) reported low SE for farmers doing conservation agriculture in the Red River Basin, Minnesota, despite the support provided by the project implementing agency. The low SE imply less investment by the project management in preparing local beneficiaries to take off after the withdrawal of resources invariably risks the sustainability of the changes promoted and benefits gained from the project.

In the context of donor-funded projects, the findings of this study have practical implications on how local beneficiaries can persevere with emerging challenges in the absence of donor support. Apart from solving community-specific problems, project implementers should also provide local beneficiaries with knowledge, skill and opportunities to exercise or solve those problems on their own. Consistent with Levinger & McLeod (2002), they should ensure activities in the project’s final years contribute to the solidification of the behavioural changes made by the local beneficiaries. The findings have also theoretical implications. According to SCT, the accomplishment of goals for groups, organisations or societies depends on their capability to identify and harness the abilities of other individuals or organisations and that there are limits to what people can achieve individually or collectively. This means local beneficiaries who remained in the realm of the project formed groups with links to other service providers and had better chances of improving their SE and successfully addressing emerging challenges. This is due to continued access to technical and managerial support, capital and information, which are important in improving local beneficiaries’ competitiveness in the market chain and sustaining the skills and services promoted by the projects (Ndombi, 2020).

Outcome expectancies (OEs)

In this study, OEs were considered in terms of local beneficiaries' access to supportive services such as the agricultural market, inputs and regular contacts with government extension workers. The results (Table 1) show that 47.8% of local beneficiaries reported low OEs. At the project level, 48.3% and 47.2% of ISFM and ECO–ACT projects reported low OEs. Low OEs suggest access to government agricultural extension workers, the agricultural market and inputs (in this case, improved seeds for project supported crops) declined post-project resource withdrawal. Outcome expectancy issues also surfaced in qualitative results as discussed hereunder.
Local beneficiaries contacted by government extension workers

During the field survey, it was noted that of the six surveyed villages, only two villages (Mtakanini and Nahoro) had government AEWs. This is contrary to the government’s commitment to ensure every village has AEW as stipulated in the national agriculture policy of 2013 (URT, 2013). The shortage of government AEWs, which was especially severe in villages without AEWs, reduced farmers’ contact with the AEWs, resulting in a lower likelihood of receiving expert guidance, which is crucial in making the best farm decisions, as well as a low chance of success and OEs. The scarcity of AEWs was exacerbated, according to the DAICOs in Ntantumbo and Chamwino Districts, by the transfer of staff who worked with the projects and the lack of replacement for those who went for further studies. In response to the shortage of government AEWs, local beneficiaries of the ISFM project relied on community-based extension workers, who according to participants of FGDs at Mchomoro and Mawa villages, were trained by the project as evidenced by the following remarks:

Thanks to the project as they trained community-based extension workers who are still around and when they know you have some difficulties, they come to address them and do not ask for any payment (FGD, Mchomoro Village 27/04/2021).

The representative for CARITAS also confirmed the continued functioning of the village-based agriculture advisor (VBAAs) and that they trained them more than the other groups’ members to be able to assist fellow farmers at the community level. At Mawa Village, it was observed that one female VBA was honoured by the name of “Mwalimu”, (a Swahili word meaning teacher) owing to her support to fellow farmers. Despite their relevance in enhancing farmers’ livelihoods, community-based extension services are in most cases unsustainable when donor-funded initiatives that they participated in are phased out (Abed et al., 2020). In contrast, the findings of this study show VBAAs continued to operate, and their role in delivering services to fellow farmers was widely recognized. Besides, they helped to fill a gap created by the absence of government AEWs in the study areas despite being officially unrecognised in the government AEWs employment schemes.

Access to market for project supported crops

During the field survey, it was noted that the main buyers of crops before and after the withdrawal of the ECO – ACT project resources were middlemen from Dodoma city and that prices for sunflower, sorghum and pearl millet were consistently low. For the ISFM project, FGD participants at both Mchomoro and Mawa villages reported that between 2018 and 2020 there was a drastic fall in the price of soybeans per kilogramme from two thousand shillings to three hundred shillings. According to the Ntantumbo District DAICO, the price drop was caused by a shift in main buyers to markets in Zambia, a neighbouring country, following dissatisfaction with the high purchase price and the operationalization of the warehouse receipt system as of 2018. Similarly, the fall in the price of maize was attributed to the ban by the central government to export cereals to neighbouring countries in 2020. Unfortunately, the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA), the main buyer in the district after the export ban, offered lower prices. These findings show that trade policies and the government’s proclamation of bans for the export of crops potentially affected local beneficiaries’ access to fair markets. Low access to markets after the project resource withdrawal was also reported by Komba et al. (2019) following the ending of the de-linking of agricultural extension information and service delivery project in Arumeru District.

Access to improved seeds

The FGD findings at Mawa and Mchomoro villages showed that although maize improved seeds were available in local agro-shops, few ISFM local beneficiaries sowed traditional seeds; due to the inability to purchase the improved seed varieties. The situation was different for soybeans whose improved seeds were not available in agro-shops as confirmed by the Ntantumbo DAICO:

“We have tried to search for improved soybean seeds from agriculture research institutes such as ARI Naliendele and ARI Uyole, but all in vain. Though the local varieties are doing good and have more weight, we believe if we get the improved varieties the production and productivity of soybeans will improve more” (DAICO, Ntantumbo District Council, 16/04/2021).

However, it was learnt that some efforts had been taken to enhance local beneficiaries’ access to improved seeds. CARITAS, Songea, continued to mobilise farmers to transform farmers’ groups into saving and internal lending community (SILC) groups and facilitated the groups to join into ‘Kilimo Fund’ (literally meaning agricultural fund) to enable them to save money for purchasing farm inputs during the planting season, which was usually lacking. Besides, the District Council linked farmers’ groups to the National Microfinance Bank and CRDB Plc Bank to secure funds for purchasing farm inputs. These efforts increased the likelihood of local beneficiaries accessing improved seeds and enhancing their OEs.

Inability to purchase improved seeds in agro-shops was also evident among local beneficiaries of the ECO-ACT project. Instead, most of them reported recycling the first generation of improved seeds offered by the project, especially when the government delayed or did not supply free seeds for improved sorghum and pearl millet. The findings suggest that local beneficiaries failed to realise the potential of improved seeds and breaking the dependency cycle. Similarly, Kansiime et al. (2020) reported that over 90% of Tanzanian smallholder farmers sowed recycled seeds from prior harvests, notwithstanding their poor quality. Through FGDs, it was further revealed that the production of sorghum quality declared seeds at Idifu Village had stopped despite the efforts to link the producers to Tanzania’s official seed certification institute (TOSCI) for the inability to secure foundation seeds, potential buyers and contact with TOSCI officials. These findings are supported by Kansiime et al. (2020) who reported failure to access foundation seed, inspections, and seed testing services as factors hampering QDS production in the Arusha and Dodoma Regions.
Hypothesis testing

The study aimed to determine if self-efficacy and outcome expectancies are related to the attitude towards project resource withdrawal. Thus, a Chi-square test for independence was performed to examine the association between the hypothesized variables and the results are presented in Table 3.

The association between SE and attitude

It was hypothesized that local beneficiaries with high SE are not more likely to report positive attitudes than their counterparts (H₀). It was further hypothesized that SE is not positively related to local beneficiaries’ attitudes towards project resource withdrawal (H₀). The results (Table 3) reveal that, of the 151 respondents of the ISFM project, 90.0% reported low SE and negative attitude while 85.3% reported high SE and positive attitude. The results for Chi-square test showed SE is significantly related to attitude, χ²(4, n = 151) = 109.54, P=0.000, C = 0.648. Considering the ECO–ACT project, the results (Table 3) show that of the 123 respondents, 91.8% of the respondents reported low SE and negative attitude while 93.1% reported high SE and positive attitude. The results for the Chi-square test showed a significant association between SE and attitude χ²(4, n = 123) = 100.501, P=0.000, C=0.671. The findings suggest that local beneficiaries who reported high SE were more likely to have developed a positive attitude than those reporting low SE. Henceforth, we fail to accept the H₀ for both study projects in favour of H₁.

The association between OEs and attitude

It was hypothesized that local beneficiaries with wider access to support services are not more likely to report positive attitudes than their counterparts (H₀). It was further hypothesized that outcome expectancies are not positively related to attitude (H₀). The findings (Table 3) indicate that 60.3% of the ISFM project local beneficiaries reported limited access to support services and negative attitudes while closer to two-thirds (65.6%) reported wider access to support services and positive attitudes. The results for Chi-square test showed OEs is significantly associated with attitude, χ²(4, n = 151) = 31.090, P=0.000, C = 0.413. Considering the ECO–ACT project, the results (Table 3) show that 69.0% reported limited access to support services and negative attitudes while 64.3% reported wider access to support services and positive attitudes. The results for the Chi-square test showed that the relations between OEs and attitude were significant χ²(4, n = 123) =16.917, P=0.002, C=0.348. The findings from both projects suggest that local beneficiaries with greater access to vital farm support services (e.g., crop market, improved inputs, contact by government AEWs) are more likely to remain positive in the face of disruptions resulting from the withdrawal of project resources. Henceforth, we fail to accept H₀ for both study projects.

### Table 3: Descriptive analysis for ISFM and ECO – ACT project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>SE Attitudes</th>
<th>ECO - ACT Attitudes</th>
<th>SE χ²</th>
<th>OEs χ²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>df=4; p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>63(92.0)</td>
<td>3(4.4)</td>
<td>2(2.9)</td>
<td>58(91.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4(50.0)</td>
<td>1(12.5)</td>
<td>3(37.0)</td>
<td>2(50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>5(6.7)</td>
<td>6(8.0)</td>
<td>64(85.3)</td>
<td>3(5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OEs</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>44(60.3)</td>
<td>5(6.8)</td>
<td>24(32.9)</td>
<td>40(69.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7(41.2)</td>
<td>5(29.4)</td>
<td>5(29.4)</td>
<td>3(33.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wider</td>
<td>21(34.4)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>40(65.6)</td>
<td>18(32.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s computation.

### Conclusions

This study explored the attitudes of local beneficiaries towards project resources withdrawal for donor-funded projects and the circumstances required for them to maintain a positive attitude post-exit. Inconsistent with H₀, in comparison to their counterparts, local beneficiaries with higher SE and OEs had a positive attitude and a strong positive significant relationship existed between SE and attitude, as well as between OEs and attitudes. Hence, we failed to accept H₀ (for both projects), implying that promoting SE and OEs can potentially help local beneficiaries maintain a positive attitude. We conclude that local beneficiaries had a mildly negative attitude toward project resource withdrawal; and that, apart from addressing community-specific issues, equipping local beneficiaries with the competencies for self-problem solving, and the continued functioning of VBAAs can aid local beneficiaries in maintaining a positive attitude post-project resources withdrawal. Finally, we posit that SCT can be used to explore attitude and the necessary conditions for sustaining a positive attitude.

It has been concluded that providing local beneficiaries with the skills needed to solve problems on their own has practical implications for maintaining a positive attitude. Therefore, the study recommends that project implementers should conduct an assessment to determine the extent to which benefits or benefit-enhancing behaviours are likely to be sustained after project completion; and then, devise and implement activities that throughout the transition phase solidify the behavioural changes made. This will require project designs to include special funds for implementing activities designated to solidify behavioural changes made.
Besides, to effectively take advantage of the role of community-based extension services, the government need to put in place a policy framework for the formalization VBAAs.

The current study is one of several that use the SCT to take a psychological approach to behaviour change. Consequently, it is an important study of the socio-cognitive model of behaviour and sustainability, as well as an example of behavioural research in a developing country's agriculture sector. The study’s framework, on the other hand, will be useful for future research on the influence of the attitude of local beneficiaries on project sustainability.

The study included a case study of two projects. As a result, the findings of the study may not accurately reflect the behaviour of local beneficiaries across the country.

Acknowledgement

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, JM., DM., AA.; Methodology, JM., DM., AA.; Data Collection, JM., DM., AA.; Formal Analysis, JM., DM., AA.; Writing—Original Draft Preparation, JM., DM., AA.; Writing—Review And Editing, JM., DM., AA. All authors have read and agreed to the published the final version of the manuscript.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Ethical review and approval were waived for this study, due to that the research does not deal with vulnerable groups or sensitive issues.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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