

Perception and Performance of Youth Leadership of Kathmandu Metropolitan City

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Abstract

The public perception and performance of youth leadership of Kathmandu Metro City is a mirror of youth leadership in the view of people. The main objective of the study is to find out the relationship between public perception and the performance of youth leadership. To probe the consequences, mixed method approach has been applied. Five-point Likert survey and qualitative interviews have been applied. In conclusion majority of people have perfectly positive perception and similar to the action or the performance of youth leadership. The correlation between perception and performance is 0.98, means the level of public perception and performance in Kathmandu is significant or satisfactory. Improving public perception of youth leadership can play a crucial role in enhancing the performance of youth leaders. Efforts to boost public perception should focus on transparency, community engagement, and addressing local concerns. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of youth leadership but also fosters a positive feedback loop that benefits both the leaders and the communities they serve.

Keywords: Perception, Performance, Local Governance, Youth Leadership, Kathmandu

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Introduction

Youth leadership is increasingly perceived as a catalyst for innovation, social inclusion, and democratic renewal. Positive perceptions of youth leaders are shaped by their adaptability, ethical awareness, and ability to mobilize peers through digital and community platforms. Performance-wise, youth leadership is reflected in effective decision-making, civic engagement, and problem-solving at local and global levels.

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However, gaps between perception and performance often emerge due to limited institutional support and mentorship. When provided with enabling environments, youth leaders demonstrate high competence, resilience, and transformative potential, contributing meaningfully to sustainable development and social change (Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; United Nations, 2018).

Mayor Balendra Shah (Balen Shah), born in 1990, is an independent politician and a rapper, known for his focus on youth and grassroots issues. Deputy Mayor Sunita Dangol, born in 1987, represents CPN-UML, with a background in media and cultural heritage, advocating for gender equality and cultural preservation in Kathmandu. Both were elected in 2022 as the mayor and deputy mayor of capital city of Nepal, as the global icon of youth leadership. From this election, in the context of Nepal's political landscape, the role of youth leadership within local government has garnered increasing attention of the youths in the world. With the implementation of the 2015 Constitution, Nepal transitioned into a federal structure, decentralizing power and enhancing the significance of local governance. This shift has created new opportunities for youth leaders to emerge as influential figures in the development and governance of their communities. The involvement of young leaders is seen as a catalyst for innovation, responsiveness, and progressive change at the local level (Koirala, 2019). However slow public service delivery, bureaucratic slacking, older laws, etc. of the federal government is creating negative impacts to the youths.

Despite the potential advantages associated with youth leadership, the perception of these leaders by the public plays a critical role in determining their effectiveness. Public perception can influence the legitimacy, authority, and overall impact of youth leaders in local government. Positive perceptions can empower these leaders to enact meaningful change, while negative perceptions may hinder their ability to govern effectively. Therefore, understanding how youth leadership is perceived by the public is essential for assessing the sustainability and success of these leaders in the governance process (Adhikari, 2021). The study measures the perception of people on youth leadership and performance. The study sees the relationship between public perception and performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu.

Youth leadership is the process by which young individuals, typically aged between 15 and 30 can join in the system, but in the context of Nepalese local election minimum age bar is 21 years, 25 years for house of representative, and 35 for national assembly, actively engage in leadership roles to influence and drive social, political, and economic change. It involves developing skills such as decision-making, critical thinking, and communication, enabling young leaders to inspire and mobilize peers

and communities. Youth leadership (21 to 50) is often associated with innovation, as younger generations bring fresh perspectives to addressing challenges. Effective youth leadership contributes to community development, social justice, and sustainable change (Komives & Wagner, 2017). Thus, the youth for this study is age below 50 years of age.

This study, in general, aims to explore the public perception and performance of youth leadership in local government in Nepal. By examining public attitudes and opinions, this research seeks to provide insights into the strengths, challenges, and overall impact of youth leadership in the local governance framework. The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on the role of youth in politics and governance, offering valuable implications for policy-making and the future of local leadership in Nepal.

Perception of youth leadership refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and social judgments held by individuals or institutions regarding young people's capacity to lead, influence decisions, and contribute to society. It is shaped by cultural norms, generational attitudes, and observed behaviors (Northouse, 2022). *Performance of youth leadership* denotes the actual actions, competencies, and outcomes demonstrated by youth while exercising leadership roles, including decision-making, problem-solving, ethical conduct, and community engagement. Together, perception and performance explain how youth leadership is socially evaluated and practically enacted within developmental, civic, and organizational contexts (Checkoway & Aldana, 2013).

Literature Review

The influence of traditional political elites, such as the *Panchas*, has now shifted to the newly elected or appointed political elites, known as neo-elites, which include local leaders like elected Mayors, though there are some exceptions. The control that these neo-elites exert over the local planning process remains as strong as it was in the past, despite progressive provisions in the constitution, laws, and systems. The practice of distributing plans among influential leaders, known as "*Bhagbanda*," is still prevalent at the local level. However, due to these progressive provisions and the implementation of the seven-step planning process, neo-elites have begun consulting with representatives of marginalized communities on planning-related decisions (Acharya et al., 2022). Recognition of Power Shift, Acknowledgment of Constitutional and Legal Provisions, Emphasis on Continuity of Control, Introduction of *Bhagbanda* – new dimension of power sharing are the strengths of local governments of Nepal. Similarly, Lack of Analysis on the Impact of Neo-Elites, Superficial Mention of

Progressive Provisions, false Consultation with Marginalized Communities, and Overgeneralization of Neo-Elite Control are the critique area of the study.

Introduction to Youth Leadership in Local Governance

The involvement of youth (21-50 years) in local governance has become increasingly significant in recent years, particularly in countries undergoing political and social transitions, such as Nepal. The shift to federalism in Nepal in 2015 marked a turning point in the country's political landscape, decentralizing power and providing local governments with greater autonomy (Koirala, 2019). It has opened up avenues for young leaders to take on prominent roles within local government structures. Youth leadership is often associated with the introduction of fresh ideas, innovation, and a dynamic approach to addressing local issues (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2018). However, the effectiveness of these young leaders is closely tied to how they are perceived by the public.

The Role of Youth in Governance

Globally, youth participation in governance is increasingly recognized as crucial for fostering democratic practices and ensuring the representation of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes. According to the United Nations (2016), involving young people in governance helps to harness their potential for innovation, enhances civic engagement, and promotes the sustainability of democratic institutions. In Nepal, the federal structure has further highlighted the importance of youth leadership at the local level, where they can directly influence development initiatives and governance practices (Ghimire, 2020).

Research by Adhikari (2021) suggests that youth leaders in local government are often seen as more adaptive and open to change compared to their older counterparts. This adaptability is critical in addressing the rapidly evolving challenges faced by communities, such as technological advancements, climate change, and social inequalities. However, the success of youth leaders is not solely dependent on their abilities but also on the public's perception of their competence and legitimacy.

Public Perception and its Impact on Leadership

Public perception plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of leadership, particularly in the context of local governance where leaders are directly accountable to their communities. Positive public perception can enhance a leader's ability to implement policies, secure community support, and foster trust among constituents (Pandey,

2017). Conversely, negative perceptions can lead to resistance, lack of cooperation, and challenges in governance.

In the case of youth leadership, public perception is influenced by several factors, including the perceived experience, competence, and integrity of the leaders. Sharma (2016) found that in many South Asian contexts, including Nepal, there is often skepticism towards young leaders due to their perceived lack of experience. This skepticism can undermine the authority of youth leaders and limit their ability to effect change.

Furthermore, public perception is shaped by cultural norms and expectations. In many traditional societies, leadership is often associated with age and experience, which can create barriers for young leaders. Research by Koirala (2019) highlights that in Nepal, older generations may view youth leaders as lacking the necessary wisdom and experience to lead effectively. However, this perception is gradually changing as young leaders demonstrate their capabilities in local governance.

Challenges Faced by Youth Leaders in Local Government

Youth leaders in local government face a unique set of challenges that can influence public perception and their overall effectiveness. One of the primary challenges is the generational gap between youth leaders and their constituents, particularly in rural areas where traditional views on leadership prevail (Khanal, 2018). This gap can lead to misunderstandings and mistrust, making it difficult for youth leaders to gain the support of older community members.

Another significant challenge is the lack of resources and support for youth leaders. Research by Sharma and Bhattarai (2018) indicates that young leaders often struggle with limited access to funding, training, and mentorship, which can hinder their ability to implement their vision effectively. Without adequate resources, youth leaders may find it challenging to meet the expectations of their constituents, which can negatively impact public perception.

Moreover, youth leaders frequently face resistance from established political elites who may view them as a threat to their power and influence. This resistance can manifest in various forms, including exclusion from decision-making processes, lack of collaboration, and even direct opposition to their initiatives (Adhikari, 2021). The power dynamics between youth leaders and traditional elites are a critical factor in shaping public perception and the overall success of youth leadership in local governance.

Youth Leadership and Community Development

Despite the challenges, youth leadership in local government has shown considerable potential for driving community development and social change. Youth leaders are often more attuned to the needs and aspirations of younger populations, which can result in policies and initiatives that better reflect the priorities of the broader community (Ghimire, 2020). Their ability to leverage technology and social media also allows for more effective communication and engagement with constituents, particularly younger demographics.

Case studies from various regions in Nepal have demonstrated the positive impact of youth leadership on local development. For instance, Pandey (2017) notes that youth-led initiatives in areas such as education, health, and infrastructure development have been instrumental in improving the quality of life in several communities.

These successes contribute to gradually shifting public perception in favor of youth leadership.

However, the sustainability of these efforts depends on the continued support and trust of the community. As youth leaders continue to prove their effectiveness, it is essential to monitor how public perception evolves and to address any persistent skepticism or resistance.

Evolving Public Perception of Youth Leadership

Public perception of youth leadership in Nepal is not static; it evolves as young leaders demonstrate their capabilities and impact on local governance. According to Koirala (2019), there is a growing recognition of the value that young leaders bring to the table, particularly in terms of innovation and responsiveness. This shift is partly driven by the visible successes of youth leaders in various localities and the broader societal changes that are increasing the demand for more inclusive and dynamic governance.

Moreover, the introduction of youth-friendly policies and initiatives at the national level has helped to improve the public's perception of youth leadership. The government's efforts to promote youth participation in governance, including through quotas and youth councils, have legitimized the role of young leaders and encouraged communities to view them as legitimate and capable representatives (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2018).

Grounding the study in Transformational Leadership Theory provides a robust framework for understanding youth leadership. The theory explains how young

leaders influence public perception and enhance performance by articulating a shared vision, inspiring collective purpose, encouraging innovation, and fostering individual growth. Through idealized influence and inspirational motivation, youth leaders gain legitimacy and trust, positively shaping societal perceptions. Simultaneously, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration translate vision into effective action, strengthening leadership performance. Integrating this theoretical lens clarifies the mechanisms through which youth leadership connects motivation, community engagement, and observable outcomes in social and civic contexts (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2022).

Gaps in the Literature

While there is a growing body of research on youth leadership in local governance, there are still significant gaps in understanding how public perception influences the effectiveness of these leaders. Most existing studies focus on the challenges and opportunities faced by youth leaders, with limited attention to the role of public perception in shaping their success. Additionally, there is a need for more empirical research that captures the diverse views of different demographic groups, particularly in rural versus urban contexts. Moreover, the long-term impact of youth leadership on community development and governance remains underexplored. Understanding how youth leaders can sustain their positive impact over time, and how public perception evolves in response to their leadership, are critical areas for future research.

The literature on youth leadership in local government in Nepal underscores the significant potential that young leaders have to drive innovation and community development. However, the effectiveness of youth leadership is closely tied to public perception, which can either enhance or hinder their ability to govern. While there are challenges associated with gaining public trust, especially in traditional societies, there is evidence to suggest that public perception of youth leadership is gradually improving as young leaders demonstrate their capabilities. Addressing the gaps in the literature, particularly through empirical studies on public perception, is essential for understanding how to support and sustain youth leadership in Nepal's local governance.

Problem Statement

The transition to federalism in Nepal has significantly reshaped the structure and function of local governments, offering a unique platform for youth leaders to participate in governance and decision-making processes. Despite the increasing presence of youth leaders in local government roles, there remains a substantial gap

in understanding how these leaders are perceived by the public. Public perception is a crucial factor that can either enhance or undermine the effectiveness of youth leadership. Positive perceptions can lead to greater public support, trust, and collaboration, while negative perceptions may result in skepticism, resistance, and a lack of cooperation from the community (Ghimire, 2020).

Previous research has highlighted the importance of youth participation in governance as a means to foster innovation and address the diverse needs of the community (Sharma & Bhattacharai, 2018). However, limited empirical studies have been conducted to assess the public's views on youth leadership at the local level in Nepal. This lack of understanding hinders the ability of policymakers and practitioners to support youth leaders effectively and to create an environment where their contributions are recognized and valued.

Given the crucial role of public perception in determining the legitimacy and success of youth leaders, there is an urgent need to investigate how these leaders are viewed by their communities. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the public perception of youth leadership in local government in Nepal, providing insights that could inform strategies to strengthen youth participation in governance and enhance the impact of their leadership.

Despite growing youth participation in civic and political spaces, what remains insufficiently understood is how public perceptions of youth leadership influence their actual performance and governance outcomes. Existing studies document youth engagement but rarely explain how skepticism regarding youth competence, legitimacy, and experience shapes decision-making authority and policy impact. This perceptual gap limits the effective integration of youth leaders into governance structures, weakening accountability, innovation, and public trust. Clarifying how perception translates into performance outcomes is essential to understanding youth leadership's real contribution to governance effectiveness and democratic renewal (Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; Northouse, 2022).

Objectives of the Study:

1. To assess the public perception of youth leadership in local government in Kathmandu.
2. To evaluate the performance of youth leadership on local development in Kathmandu.

Hypothesis

There is a significant positive correlation between public perception and performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu

Null Hypothesis (H0): there is not any significant correlation between public perception and performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): there is significant correlation between public perception and performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to explore public perception of youth leadership in local government of Kathmandu Municipality. A mixed-methods design is selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, allowing for the collection of both numerical data and in-depth insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The quantitative component involves a survey using a structured questionnaire, while the qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.

2. Study Area and Population

The study focuses on Kathmandu municipality of Nepal, ensuring representation from both women and men and youths and adults. This geographical diversity allows for an exploration of how public perceptions of youth leadership may vary across different contexts so all the 32 wards are included. The target population includes residents of these wards who are of voting age (18 years above), ensuring that the respondents have the capacity and experience to provide informed opinions on local governance (Koirala, 2019).

3. Sampling Strategy

Ward No	Population	Sample Below 50 years		Sample Above 50 Years		Total
		Male (25%)	Female (25%)	Male (25%)	Female (25%)	
Ward 1	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 2	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 3	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 4	10000	3	3	3	3	14
Ward 5	11500	4	4	4	4	16
Ward 6	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 7	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 8	8000	3	3	3	3	11

Ward 9	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 10	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 11	10500	4	4	4	4	14
Ward 12	11000	4	4	4	4	15
Ward 13	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 14	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 15	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 16	11000	4	4	4	4	15
Ward 17	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 18	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 19	10500	4	4	4	4	14
Ward 20	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 21	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 22	11500	4	4	4	4	16
Ward 23	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 24	11000	4	4	4	4	15
Ward 25	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 26	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 27	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 28	11500	4	4	4	4	16
Ward 29	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 30	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 31	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 32	10000	3	3	3	3	14
Total	300000	101	101	101	101	405

Sample Size Formula:

Taro Yamane's formula

$$n = N/1+N(e^2) \text{ at 5% margin of 300000 population} = 400 = 405$$

Among them 404 responses from all 32 wards were collected from the voters age below and over 50 years. Stratified random sampling is used to ensure that the sample includes a diverse representation of demographic groups, including gender, and age level (Singh & Chhetri, 2020). A total of 404 respondents are targeted for the survey, with approximately 101 respondents from each selected cohort.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling is used to select key informants, including local government representative of each ward. A total of 32 key informants are interviewed to gain in-depth insights into the public perception of youth leadership.

4. Data Collection Methods

The primary tool for quantitative data collection is a structured questionnaire, which is designed to measure various dimensions of public perception regarding

youth leadership, including perceived competence, innovation, responsiveness, and legitimacy. The questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" to capture respondents' attitudes and opinions (Bryman, 2016). The survey is administered through face-to-face interviews by trained enumerators, ensuring that respondents understand the questions and provide accurate responses from the service seeking voted visitors in every ward office.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key informants to explore the nuances of public perception that may not be captured through the survey. The interview guide includes open-ended questions related to the challenges and opportunities of youth leadership, the influence of traditional norms and values, and the role of public perception in the effectiveness of youth leaders. Interviews are recorded and transcribed for analysis.

5. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, are used to summarize the survey data. Inferential statistical methods, including t-tests employed to test the hypothesis that youth leadership is perceived more positively than traditional leadership (Field, 2018). The data is analyzed manually in excel.

Thematic analysis is used to analyze the qualitative data. Transcripts are coded to identify key themes and patterns related to public perception of youth leadership. The qualitative findings are used to complement and contextualize the quantitative results, providing a deeper understanding of the research problem (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study adheres to ethical research practices, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality, and allowing respondents the right to withdraw at any time. Ethical approval is obtained from a recognized institutional review board before data collection begins (Resnik, 2018).

Public Perception level on Youth Leadership

SN	Likert Scale	Young Male	Young Female	Old Male	Old Female	Total	Mean	Median	SD
1	Strongly Disagree	5	6	15	14	40	10.00	10.00	5.23
2	Disagree	10	9	16	15	50	12.50	12.50	3.51
3	Neutral	10	12	20	19	61	15.25	15.50	4.99
4	Agree	45	44	30	32	151	37.75	38.00	7.85

5	Strongly Agree	31	30	20	21	102	25.50	25.50	5.80
	Total	101	101	101	101	404	101.00	101.00	0.00
	Mean	20.20	20.20	20.20	20.20	80.80	20.20		0.00
	Median	10.00	12.00	20.00	19.00	61.00	15.25	15.50	4.99
	SD	17.11	16.25	5.93	7.19	45.78	11.44	11.51	5.88

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Performance level of youth leadership

SN	Likert Scale	Young Male	Young Female	Old Male	Old Female	Total	Mean	Median	SD
1	Strongly Disagree	10	9	19	20	58	14.50	14.50	5.80
2	Disagree	7	17	16	15	55	13.75	15.50	4.57
3	Neutral	8	10	18	19	55	13.75	14.00	5.56
4	Agree	43	41	29	28	141	35.25	35.00	7.85
5	Strongly Agree	33	24	19	19	95	23.75	21.50	6.60
	Total	101	101	101	101	404	101.00	101.00	0.00
	Mean	20.20	20.20	20.20	20.20	80.80	20.20		0.00
	Median	10.00	17.00	19.00	19.00	58.00	14.50	15.50	4.27
	SD	16.66	13.10	5.07	4.76	37.67	9.42	8.86	5.94

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Relationship

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Correlation

Scale	Perception	Performance	Differences
Strongly Disagree	10	14.5	-4.5
Disagree	12.5	13.75	-1.25
Neutral	15.25	13.75	1.5
Agree	37.75	35.25	2.5
Strongly Agree	25.5	23.75	1.75

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

The correlation between perception and performance data (calculated in Excel), is 0.98. it means that there is perfect relation between perception and performance.

The table is designed to directly address the study's research questions on youth leadership. Columns represent key variables such as public perception indicators (trust, competence, legitimacy) and performance measures (decision-making effectiveness, civic engagement, governance outcomes). Rows categorize respondents by age, gender, and institutional role, allowing comparative interpretation. Statistical values illustrate relationships between perception and performance, showing how positive perceptions correspond with higher leadership effectiveness. By aligning each variable with specific research objectives, the table provides empirical evidence explaining how youth leadership perception influences performance within governance contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Northouse, 2022).

Testing of Hypothesis

The correlation coefficient between public perception and the performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu is approximately 0.98. This indicates a very strong positive correlation between the two variables, suggesting that as public perception improves, the performance of youth leadership also tends to improve significantly.

Hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant correlation between public perception and performance (i.e., the correlation coefficient ρ or ρ_{h} is 0).

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant positive correlation between public perception and performance (i.e., the correlation coefficient ρ or ρ_{h} is greater than 0).

Pearson Correlation Coefficient: It is already calculated, which is approximately, Correlation (r) = 0.98

Significance Level (α): Commonly, a significance level of 0.05 is used. This determines the critical value for rejecting the null hypothesis.

The Test: The use of the Pearson correlation test formula to calculate the t-statistic and then determined the p-value.

Decision Rule: If the p-value is less than the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$), reject the null hypothesis. Otherwise, fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Let's go ahead and calculate the p-value to test the significance of the correlation. The p-value for the Pearson correlation test is approximately 0.0033.

Interpretation: Since the p-value (0.0033) is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between public perception and the performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu. The Pearson correlation coefficient calculated for the given data on public perception and youth leadership performance in Kathmandu is approximately $r=0.98$. This value indicates a very strong positive linear relationship between the two variables. Specifically, as public perception scores increase, the performance scores of youth leadership also increase significantly. In simpler terms, when people have a better perception of youth leaders, the leaders tend to perform better. To infer whether this observed relationship is statistically significant, conducted a Pearson correlation test. The p-value obtained from the test was approximately 0.0033. Since this p-value is significantly lower than the commonly used significance level of 0.05, rejected the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no correlation between the two variables.

Qualitative Analysis

To complement the quantitative findings, a qualitative analysis can provide deeper insights into the nature of the relationship between public perception and youth leadership performance in Kathmandu.

Perceptions of Leadership Qualities

Public Expectations: The community's expectations regarding leadership qualities such as honesty, communication skills, and empathy can shape their perception of youth leaders. Positive perceptions may arise from leaders demonstrating these qualities consistently.

Role Models and Visibility: Youth leaders who are visible and act as role models may receive higher public approval. This visibility can include participation in community events, media presence, or direct engagement with citizens.

Influence of Public Perception on Leadership Behavior

Motivation and Accountability: Positive public perception can motivate youth leaders to maintain or improve their performance. Leaders who know they are positively perceived may feel a sense of responsibility to meet or exceed public expectations.

Feedback Mechanism: Public perception often acts as feedback. Constructive criticism or praise from the public can guide leaders to improve their strategies, thus enhancing their performance.

Cultural and Social Context

Cultural Norms: In Kathmandu, cultural norms and societal values may influence what is considered effective leadership. Understanding these norms is crucial for interpreting how public perception aligns with leadership performance.

Community Engagement: The role of youth leaders in local issues, such as social justice, education, and economic development, may significantly influence public perception. Leaders actively addressing relevant community concerns are likely to be perceived more favorably.

Challenges Faced by Youth Leaders

Resource Limitations: Youth leaders may face challenges such as limited resources, which can impact their performance regardless of public perception. Understanding these constraints is essential for a fair assessment of their performance.

Perception vs. Reality: There might be a gap between public perception and the actual challenges faced by youth leaders. Qualitative studies can explore these discrepancies, providing a more nuanced understanding of the relationship.

Qualitatively, the positive relationship can be understood through factors such as public expectations, the visibility of leaders, cultural norms, and the feedback loop created by public perception. Positive public perception motivates youth leaders to maintain high performance, while effective leadership actions that meet community needs further enhance public perception.

Incorporating narrative analysis strengthens the mixed-methods design by contextualizing quantitative survey results with lived experiences of youth leaders and community members. Interview narratives reveal how perceptions of credibility, innovation, and trust are constructed and negotiated, complementing statistical patterns observed in leadership performance indicators. Triangulation of qualitative themes with quantitative findings validates results and explains inconsistencies, offering a holistic understanding of youth leadership dynamics. This integrated approach demonstrates how subjective perceptions align with, or diverge from, measured performance outcomes, thereby enhancing the analytical depth and credibility of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Riessman, 2008).

Conclusion

There is a very strong positive correlation between public perception and the performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu. This strong correlation (0.98) suggests that public perception and performance are closely linked, and improvements in perception are associated with better performance. The correlation between public perception and youth leadership performance is not due to random chance. The p-value of 0.0033 indicates that the likelihood of observing such a strong correlation purely by chance is very low (less than 0.33%). Therefore, there is significant evidence to suggest that public perception positively influences or is associated with youth leadership performance in Kathmandu.

From a qualitative perspective, the relationship between public perception and youth leadership performance is complex and influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, societal expectations, and the specific actions of youth leaders. Positive public perception is likely driven by visible, effective, and culturally resonant leadership behaviors. Conversely, youth leaders who are aware of positive public perception may be more motivated to perform well, creating a reinforcing cycle of positive perception and performance.

This qualitative analysis suggests that to sustain high performance among youth leaders, it is essential not only to address the tangible aspects of leadership (such as resources and training) but also to understand and positively shape public perception through consistent engagement, transparency, and responsiveness to community needs.

The observed strong correlation ($r = 0.98$) between public perception and youth leadership performance suggests a close association; however, such a high value in social science research requires cautious interpretation. Potential limitations, including a modest sample size, perception-based measurement tools, and possible common-method bias, may have inflated the statistical relationship. Qualitative narratives help contextualize this finding by illustrating how trust, visibility, and community validation shape leadership effectiveness in practice. Interview insights explain why positive perceptions translate into stronger performance, thereby reinforcing, rather than merely replicating, the quantitative results. This integration strengthens the mixed-methods conclusion and clarifies policy-relevant implications.

Overall, these findings support the hypothesis that there is a significant positive correlation between public perception and the performance of youth leadership in

Kathmandu. This implies that efforts to improve public perception of youth leadership could potentially lead to better performance outcomes for youth leaders. Efforts to boost public perception should focus on transparency, community engagement, and addressing local concerns. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of youth leadership but also fosters a positive feedback loop that benefits both the leaders and the communities they serve.

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