

## **Influence of Public Participation on Implementation of County Government Projects: Case of Makueni County, Kenya**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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*Projects are the foundation of local development in any nation that is developing. Despite the significance of county government projects to society, the majority of these initiatives have delayed, failed, or otherwise fallen short of their goals. The study aimed at assessing the influence of public participation on implementation of county government projects: case of Makueni County, Kenya. The study was guided by following specific objectives; to determine the influence of public participation in project identification process, budget preparation process, governance process and monitoring and evaluation process on implementation of Makueni county projects. A descriptive research design was used for this study. There were 330 project personnel working on projects throughout all Makueni County constituencies and this formed the study population. Thus, the target population was the project committee members, executive project management consultant members and technical officers involved in implementation of the projects for the last at least three years at Makueni sub-counties. Using a stratified random sampling procedure, 99 respondents (30% of the population) were chosen from the target population. The study used primary methods in data collection using questionnaires. Content analysis method was used to examine the qualitative data from the open-ended questions. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to interpret the quantitative data from the closed-ended questions. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and arithmetic mean, were used to examine the results. Inferential analysis was used in determination of the relationship between the variables. The results of the analysis were subsequently shown in charts and tables. The coefficient results show results that budget preparation process and governance process have a significant positive influence on project implementation, with standardized coefficients of 0.555 and 0.761, respectively. Meanwhile, monitoring and evaluation has a significant negative influence on project implementation with a standardized coefficient of -0.479. Project identification process, on the other hand, does not have a statistically significant impact on project implementation.*

**Key Words:** *Project Implementation, Public Participation, Projects Management*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Globally, project performance has been dismal as only a small number of projects implemented by governments may be suggested for excellent performance, with majority of initiatives failing to meet the intended project outcomes (PWC, 2019). Yet, global spending on projects continues to increase amounting to billions of dollars annually, and this trend has continued unabatedly in an upward direction. According to Anantatmula (2019), this necessitates proper project planning, organization, direction, and control, as well as in inspiring the team to do effective and exceptional work. Project Management Institute, (2021) further describe that without public participation, proper project implementation is not possible.

In most developed countries in the UK, USA and Australia, participatory approaches have been effective in achieving high levels of involvement and collaboration in development initiatives in the majority of nations, inspiring people to mobilize themselves and take independent action (Saidu et al., 2014). To the fullest extent possible, communities have been included in order to encourage them to take initiative and activities that are motivated by their own considerations and considerations for effective control of their development agenda. Participation in the community is the manner by which local self-sufficiency is encouraged, hence lowering reliance on outside organizations. Public involvement in the design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of development projects are among the ways in which they help ensure proper project implementation (Hassan et al., 2019). This participation is regarded as crucial for the ownership and accomplishment of projects as well as crucial for fostering sustainable community development at the grassroots level.

However, regionally in Africa, most countries have failed to deliver on their promises of increased citizen involvement and appropriate service delivery because handing over authority and funding to local governments has not resulted in a rise in either. According to Crook (2021), decentralization in Africa does not always result in more responsive local governance. In order to strengthen oversight of service delivery to the public, local communities must participate in policy creation, organization, coordination, and execution. Only a small number of elites appear to gain from the existing allocation of resources to county administrations (Dunn, 2017). For instance, the 53 member nations of the African Union committed themselves to, among other things, promoting the conditions essential to enhance openness and public involvement when they adopted the African charter on democracy, elections, and governance in 2007 (AU, 2007). In Brazil, the Municipal Participatory Budgeting Initiative is the most frequently cited example of successful public engagement (Sprague, 2018).

Locally in Kenya, Sixty-seven percent (67%) of Kenyans approved the Constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010 in a countrywide vote on August 5, 2010, and it was subsequently promulgated on August 27. Thus, the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, which had been in effect for close to fifty years, was replaced by the CoK 2010. The Kenya Independence Order-in-Council of 1963 was created by the British House of Commons and issued. The ideas and tenets of democratic governance in CoK 2010 explicitly support unrestricted popular sovereignty as the cornerstone of government. As a result, the Constitution as a whole clearly states that the people have a right to participate in and oversee their government. The goals and tenets of decentralized government are embedded within and are equally important.

In Kenya, the devolved governments' pledge to provide services to the populace raised expectations, leading to the launch of flagship projects and the acceptance of other government-run initiatives in several counties with the purpose of promoting economic and social development. The public of Kenya put pressure on the County Governments during their first term (2013–2017) and on them to fulfill their election promises, political manifesto commitments, and international obligations as well as to show development results from the taxes received. The public is now more informed and demands openness and evidence of how county government intervention has improved the quality of their lives (PMCF, 2017). Particularly, there are now 2830 projects in Makueni County, out of which 2138 have been finished. According to appendix II, 35 of them are stalled, 116 projects have yet to start, and 414 of them are still in progress. Below is a breakdown of the projects by sub-county. For the purpose of handling the county development budget, the Makueni County government has established an online portal (Makueni County, 2022). The County Projects Management System now monitors budget and performance information for numerous programs and projects from the 30 wards established since the 2013/14 FY, primarily supporting the achievement of the County's Vision 2025.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The implementation of government projects, which accounts for a significant percentage of public sector spending globally, can have a profound impact on the economy and community empowerment (World Bank, 2017). However, the efficacy of these projects is dependent on public participation, as the failure to meet community needs can question the long-term viability of the projects (Khwaja, 2017). In Kenya, despite the significant amount of funds allocated to county government projects, many of these initiatives have failed to achieve their goals, leading to public outcry and questioning of the capacity of county governments to utilize resources effectively (Kituyi & Moi, 2021). For example, between 2013 and 2017, majority of the counties have been judged to lack the capacity to wisely utilize the resources allotted (Fourth Annual Devolution Conference, 2018). In particular, the majority of the projects slated for implementation in the county of Makueni (2017–18), including as the construction of a mango and of educational facilities, were started without the public's involvement, which later led to resistance to the entire process. As a result, many projects took longer than necessary to finish while other ones stopped. According to the auditor-report generals on the County Government of Makueni (2018), various projects in Makueni County were not carried out in compliance with the law since they took longer than planned to be finished. Political squabbles among politicians, murky organizational structures, and a lack of public monitoring caused initiatives in the health, physical infrastructure (roads), and education sectors projects to languish raises concern.

Empirically, the studies conducted have been fully conclusive in describing the role on public participation on project performance. Kirui, Chemutai, and Rotich (2015) established that 70.26% of the projects had not been finished several years after they had begun. Furthermore, in their investigation into the effects of strategy implementation on the effectiveness of CDF projects in the Marakwet West Constituency, Katamei, Omwono, and Wanza (2015) discovered that problems with leadership, cultural receptivity, structural factors, and communication rendered these projects ineffective. However, the studies that are now available do not clearly show how public engagement affects how well or unsuccessfully these county programs are implemented. The public's worry that county government initiatives in Kenya are a waste of tax payers money has been exacerbated by their poor success rate. Other viewpoints have been presented that call into question the applicability of these initiatives to Kenya's system of devolved government. If these

initiatives were carried out well, it's likely that there would be no resistance. This study therefore seeks to address these eminent research gaps. In particular, this study sought to answer the following research question, what is the influence of public participation on implementation of county government projects: case of Makueni County, Kenya?

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of public participation on implementation of county government projects: case of Makueni County, Kenya.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Empirical Literature Review**

The impact of project management techniques on the execution of governmental projects in Machakos County was examined by Ngundo and James (2018). Institutional theory, socioeconomic theory, and resource-based theory served as the study's pillars. A descriptive survey research approach was used for the investigation. The 128 projects carried out by the Machakos County Government were the target population. The respondents were the project managers who served as the primary information stewards for each project and were located either in county administrative offices, sub-county offices, or ward administrative offices. The sample size was calculated using a simple random sampling method. A questionnaire was the study tool utilized to gather population-based primary data and information. The study discovered that the use of government-funded projects in Machakos County was strongly impacted by project design, stakeholder involvement, monitoring and evaluation, and technology. In the county, monitoring and evaluation were used, but the project managers lacked the necessary software and instruments for effective and efficient reporting to the stakeholders. hardly little use of technology.

Using empirical data gathered from a sample of 326 community members who took part in the execution of the Hazina Ya Maendeleo Ya Pwani (HMP) project, Hassan et al. (2019) identified the demographic characteristics that affect community engagement. The study was conducted in the Kenyan coastal area, which includes Mombasa, Taita Taveta, Kwale, Kilifi, Lamu, and Tana River counties. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather the information. This was done using a multinomial logistic regression. The results of the study showed that education level and gender were the two demographic characteristics that substantially affected community engagement, with women participating more. The study also showed that age and the sort of economic activity, which are demographic characteristics, had no discernible impact on community involvement. The study's findings suggest that taking gender and educational level into account can help to promote the best possible community involvement in grassroots development activities.

Nyaga and James (2018) conducted research on the elements influencing the viability of programs aimed at ensuring food security for the masai community. The research design used in the study was evaluation. 1200 people who were members of or registered with various groups or organizations in the research region made up the study's total population. A 10% sample was chosen, resulting in a sample size of 120 respondents. Faith-based organizations, financial institutions, community-based organizations, and government agencies were among the project groups whose key informants were chosen. According to the study, community involvement had a favorable impact on the project's sustainability. Additionally, the financing amount would have a statistically significant favorable impact on the project's viability. The outcomes for the model's

goodness of fit test showed that community involvement and financial resources provided a satisfactory explanation for the longevity of food security programs in the research region.

According to Auya (2019), the CDF's struggle with weak leadership in the North Mugirango/Borabu Constituency was primarily due to the committee members' selection procedures. The study found that virtually all CDF committee members were chosen by a member of parliament who favors his cronies over those with higher education, experience, or leadership potential. Constituents fail to offer the essential support to the leaders (location representatives) they believe to have been imposed on them since they were not involved in picking location representatives. Additionally, because the MP's nominees (CDF committee) seldom disclose instances of theft, there were no checks and accountability systems to guarantee effective usage of the monies granted to various projects.

Sakyi-Darko and Mensah (2020) assessed the level of community involvement in development projects in the Ghanaian district of Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam. The development projects chosen were KVIPs, market structures, and water systems. This descriptive survey study approach gathered information from 72 respondents from six chosen neighborhoods within the district using semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion guide, and an observation checklist. The results showed that recipients and Development Agencies both "participated" in the development programs as a means to an end. Meeting externally imposed welfare objectives and the urgent socioeconomic needs of the communities were the ends for both the Development Agents and the communities. According to the rational choice theory, both people decide to choose the course of action that will serve their interests the best. Participation is useful in the district. To encourage communities to actively engage in the development process, it is advised that the District Assembly educate them about their duties as conduits in the decentralization process. Additionally, development agents provide communities the authority to enable project sustainability.

Said (2017) investigated the impact of project assessment methodologies on the effectiveness of county government projects, using the instance of water projects in Kenya's Wajir County. Descriptive research survey methodology was utilized in the study. Because the researcher may gather information to address queries about the state of the study subject, this technique of research was favored. According to the report, benchmarking helps project managers identify the best practices, rank areas for development, increase performance in relation to project forecasts, and skip the conventional cycle of change. The study also found that project managers may generate better projects at cheaper costs with continual development, meeting the project's goals. The analysis further proved that the county's management by objectives strategies worked. The study found that continuous improvement guarantees that project managers are able to generate better projects at lower cost, thereby accomplishing the project objectives. The study also found that continuous improvement projects have a positive impact on the performance of county government projects.

Iddi and Nuhu (2018) investigated Tanzania's government projects' monitoring and assessment. It explores the difficulties and possibilities brought about by community involvement using the 15 sub-projects chosen for the TASAF II national project in Tanzania's Bagamoyo District as examples. 55 beneficiaries and 17 key informants were purposefully chosen for the primary data collection, and they each received surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Additionally, direct field observation was used to acquire a true sense of the situation at the subproject locations. The study showed that community engagement in M&E still faced several difficulties, including cost in terms of time and money, complexity of analysis, and absence of

analysis, despite TASAF policy that empowered communities to demand, execute, and monitor services. Additionally, it was said that despite the difficulties, there are still potential to engage the community in M&E of TASAF II sub-projects.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review**

### **2.2.1 Ladder of Citizen Participation Theory**

Sherry Arnstein (1969) proposed the ladder of citizen participation theory and covered eight different forms of engagement as shown by Figure 2.1. The redistribution of power that enables the citizens, who are currently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be consciously involved in the future is what she refers to as "Arnstein's ladder,". Arnstein developed the idea and acknowledged that there are many involvement levels (Burns, 2014). The three levels, which include eight sub-levels, are as follows: Non-Involvement, which includes what he called treatment and manipulation and at which there is absolutely no participation (Burns,2014).

Arnstein's model assumes a linear progression of power and control, suggesting that as citizens climb higher on the ladder, their influence and agency increase. This assumption implies that participation is inherently hierarchical and that more involvement is always better. However, this perspective may oversimplify the complexities of public engagement. Participation is multifaceted, and the effectiveness of citizen involvement can depend on the context and the nature of the issue at hand. For instance, in some cases, a consultative approach might be more appropriate than full citizen control, particularly when technical expertise is required. A significant limitation of the Ladder of Citizen Participation is its binary view of power dynamics. By categorizing participation into discrete levels, it fails to account for the fluid and negotiated nature of power. Real-world scenarios often involve overlapping and contested spaces of influence, where power is shared, negotiated, and sometimes even revoked. This dynamic aspect is not well-captured in Arnstein's static model. Additionally, the model assumes that the end goal of participation should always be higher levels of citizen control, which might not be practical or desirable in all situations. For example, certain governmental decisions require specialized knowledge that the general public might not possess, making collaborative or delegated decision-making more effective.

Despite its limitations, the theory's emphasis on power redistribution and its clarity in differentiating levels of participation have had a lasting impact on both theoretical developments and practical applications in participatory governance. As citizen participation evolves with technological advancements and changing societal norms, Arnstein's ladder remains a pertinent tool for critically examining and improving the ways in which citizens are engaged in public affairs. This theory was the main anchor for the study and it aided in describing not only which the public was involved in the overseeing the projects but also how all the tenets of public participation affect project implementation.

### **2.2.2 Agency Theory**

The Agency Theory (AT) was developed in the economics literature by Barry, (1973). Jensen and Meckling, (1976) then applied the theory to the fields of finance and management accounting to build accounting control systems to track behavior and activities and to identify the ideal level of risk-sharing and incentive contracting. The AT mostly applies to circumstances when one person (the agent) is appointed by another person (the principle) to act on their behalf. In this instance, the state officials in charge of managing public finances make managerial choices and take administrative action on behalf of the governments to meet the demands of the general populace.

This theory assumes that both principals and agents are utility maximizers, where principals seek to maximize their returns on investments and agents aim to maximize their personal gain. The theory also assumes information asymmetry, where agents possess more information about their actions and intentions than the principals, leading to potential moral hazard and adverse selection issues. Furthermore, it presumes that principals can mitigate these issues through appropriate incentive schemes and monitoring mechanisms (Bosse & Phillips, 2016; Eisenhardt, 1989; Hill & Jones, 1992; Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

The principal and the agents are both utility maximizers driven by monetary and non-monetary factors that create incentive issues in the presence of uncertainty and information asymmetry. The primary issues with hierarchical relationships between participants in policy implementation and policy-making concerns are explained by the agency model, which also emphasizes the significance of county governments in the provision of public services. Agency theory suggests that public participation in the budget preparation process can influence the implementation of county projects by improving the principal-agent relationship, influencing incentives, and reducing information asymmetry. By involving citizens in the budgeting process, governments can ensure that public resources are being used effectively to meet the needs of the community. Additionally, it addresses issues that develop whenever there is a disagreement on county public involvement and where the principal and the agents have various attitudes and preferences regarding risk.

### **2.3.3 Stewardship Theory**

With origins in psychology and sociology, the Steward theory was used to study public governance behaviors. A steward preserves and maximizes shareholders' wealth through business performance, according to Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson (1997), since doing so maximizes the utility functions of the steward. Stewards are business leaders and managers who work for the shareholders to safeguard and maximize returns on their investments. This theory is consistent with the current study in that it discourages individualism (Donaldson & Davis, 1991) and instead supports the role of top county government officials, particularly the county treasury officials, as stewards by incorporating their objectives into the plans for the entire county. According to the stewardship approach, successful county governments result in pleased and motivated county treasury officers (stewards).

The stewardship theory emphasizes the value of arrangements that provide the steward maximal authority and are based on trust (Donaldson & Davis, 1991). The management might adhere to the agency theory's premises and prioritize serving their personal interests over the interests of the shareholders (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). This idea illustrates that when organizations make decisions about pertinent issues, other interested parties (stakeholders) should be taken into account and consulted. The Stewardship theory was used in the study to explain how county officials act as stewards, take responsibility for their positions, and diligently work to ensure that services are delivered to the highest standard across the nation. Furthermore, according to stewardship theory, the governor and county speaker should combine their responsibilities in order to cut down on administrative expenses and enhance their respective stewardship roles in the county governments and assemblies.

### **3.0 Research Methods**

A descriptive research design was used for this study. This design is focused with establishing the current state of a phenomena under research, which helps determine its current nature (Cooper & Schindler, 2017). Additionally, this research design is suited for studies when the researcher has

to draw conclusions from a wider population, making it the best option. The layout made it possible to describe the elements that affect how constituency development fund projects are carried out in Makueni County. Without changing the environment, the design also enabled explanation of the relationship between elements impacting project implementation and success at that particular time. The location of the study was Makueni County. With a predicted population of more than 0.9 million inhabitants, Makueni County has an area of 8,034.7 sq km. Geographically, it is bordered to the west by Kajiado County, to the south by Taita Taveta County, to the east by Kitui County, and to the north by Machakos County. The county is located in the dry and semi-dry areas of the country's eastern portion. The Kilungu Hills in Kaiti Subcounty, Mbooni Hills in Mbooni Subcounty, and Volcanic Chyulu Hills in Kibwezi West Constituency are some of the county's most notable physical features. The County is split into Makueni, Mbooni, Kaiti, Kibwezi East, Kibwezi West, and Kilome as its six sub-counties.

All those directly or indirectly managing the implementation of various projects in Makueni County were included in the population for this study. There are 330 project personnel working on projects throughout all Makueni County constituencies and this formed the study population (Makueni County Government, 2022). Thus, the target population was the project committee members, executive project management consultant members and technical officers involved in implementation of the projects for the last at least three years at Makueni County constituencies as shown below. Using a stratified random sampling procedure, 99 respondents (30% of the population) was chosen from the target population shown in Table 3.1 as a proportional sample size. If the sample is well-chosen and contains more than 30 items, a sample size of 30% is sufficient. As a result, the chosen sample was sufficiently large to enable trustworthy data analysis testing for variations in estimates' significance.

The study used primary methods in data collection using questionnaires. Primary data consists of unpublished, first-hand information. Questionnaires was used to achieve this. Data was gathered using a standardized questionnaire that includes both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was split into three parts: Part A was general questions about the respondents, and Part B focused on public participation in projects while Part C covered the implementation of projects in Makueni County. Individuals selected their replies using a five-point Likert scale, allowing the researcher to quantitatively analyse the data. The drop-and-pick approach was used to administer the surveys. The respondents had at least a week to react once the questionnaire is dropped off, and calls and emails were be made to check in with them. The researcher then made many trips to the different study regions to collect and follow-up on the research questionnaires.

The questionnaire was pre-tested on 10 (10% of the sample) respondents who were chosen using purposive sampling from constituencies in Nairobi County in order to increase reliability and validity. Nairobi County was chosen since it is close to the researcher and does not include any of the study's population. The purpose of the pilot study was to provide the researcher the opportunity to evaluate the efficiency of the research tools and give them a way to become familiar with the study sites. Based on the results of the pilot test, Cronbach's alpha was used next to evaluate the questionnaire's internal consistency and reliability. The piloted sample were urged to provide feedback and ideas about the instructions, the clarity of the questions, and their applicability. This exposed ambiguous questions and questionnaire flaws and give an opportunity to examine the data to see whether the chosen analytical techniques are adequate.

Data must be processed or examined in order to be effectively understood and comprehended. The process of extracting information from the gathered data and presenting it is known as data

analysis. The completed surveys were checked for accuracy and consistency. Because the emphasis was on the interpretation of the results rather than on quantification, the content analysis method was used to examine the qualitative data from the open-ended questions. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used to interpret the quantitative data from the closed-ended questions. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and arithmetic mean, were used to examine the results. Inferential analysis was used in determination of the relationship between the variables. The results of the analysis were subsequently shown in charts and tables. The following model was utilized in regression analysis to determine the relationship between the research variables.

Before beginning the study, approval from NACOSTI and the Makueni County Government was requested. After receiving enough information about the study's needs, respondents were asked to agree to participating. Since their identities won't be disclosed on the surveys and codes were utilized, the participants' anonymity won't be jeopardized. Additionally, the researcher made sure that this study doesn't affect any individuals, groups, or other parties. Privacy was maintained during the entire research period and participation was entirely voluntary, free from coercion or inducement.

#### 4.0 Data Analysis, Results and Discussions

##### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

##### 4.1.1 Influence of Public Participation in Project Identification Process

**Table 1 Weighted Mean for Public Participation**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Public participation during project identification helps members of the community to participate in development of a project.	87	1	5	4.66	0.804
Public participation in project identification helps identify problems and translate them into solutions or actions.	87	1	5	4.02	1.585
Public participation in project initiation helps project managers identify the factors that affects the community ability to implement development projects.	87	1	5	4.09	1.254
Project identification through public participation helps to articulate public needs in a project.	87	1	5	4.25	1.081
Public participation in project initiation helps identify project site, costing, as well as benefits to the community.	87	1	5	4.03	1.333

<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Project identification through the public facilitates feasibility studies and identification of project donors.	87	2	5	4.61	0.826

The mean values for these statements range from 4.02 to 4.66, indicating a generally positive perception of the impact of public participation of project identification. The highest mean value, 4.66, is associated with the statement that public participation during project identification helps community members engage in the development of a project. This suggests a strong agreement among respondents regarding this aspect of public participation.

On the other hand, the lowest mean value, 4.02, pertains to the statement that public participation in project identification helps identify problems and translate them into solutions or actions, indicating slightly less strong agreement but still a positive perception. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.804 to 1.585, indicate the level of dispersion or variability in the responses, with lower standard deviations suggesting more consistent responses among the participants.

#### **4.1.2 Influence of Public Participation in Budget Preparation Process**

**Table 2 Weighted mean for Budget Preparation Process**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Budget preparation through the public ensures spending is monitored appropriately.	87	1	5	4.66	0.874
Public participation facilitates performance of tasks within the allocated budget	87	1	5	3.22	1.466
All the stakeholders are involved in financial detailed plan to establish the costs required during the implementation phases of the project	87	1	5	3.85	1.709
Public participation in budget preparation fosters the timeliness in release of project funds.	87	1	5	3.92	1.488
Through public participation, there is enhanced financial management in the project funds.	87	2	5	4.79	0.531

The mean values for the different aspects of public participation in budget preparation vary. Budget preparation through the public with a mean of 4.66 and enhanced financial management in project funds with a mean of 4.79 both received relatively high mean scores, suggesting that respondents generally believed that public participation positively impacts these areas. However, the aspects of public participation facilitating performance of tasks within the allocated budget (3.22), involvement of all stakeholders in financial detailed planning (3.85), and fostering timeliness in the release of project funds (3.92) received lower mean scores, indicating more mixed

or moderately positive perceptions. The standard deviations, on the other hand, provide insights into the degree of agreement or disagreement among respondents for each aspect, with higher standard deviations suggesting more variability in responses.

#### 4.1.3 Influence of Public Participation in Governance Process

**Table 3 Weighted Mean of Governance Process**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Public participation in project governance helps identify problems and translate them into solutions or actions.	87	2	5	4.66	0.744
Every project is clearly planned for in terms of time and completion schedule.	87	1	5	4.44	1.336
Project governance through public participation helps in organizing project teams for various tasks.	87	1	5	4.44	1.198
Public participation on project governance ensures generation of progress reports and contract documents	87	2	5	4.59	0.971
Public participation on project governance ensures project objectives are met	87	1	5	4.48	0.819
Public participation during project governance helps members of the community to participate in development of a project	87	1	5	4.69	0.840
Project governance through public participation helps in creating a work flow during project implementation	87	1	5	4.72	0.817

The mean score in table 3 ranged from 4.44 to 4.72 indicating that public participation is perceived positively in various dimensions of project governance. The standard deviations, which represent the degree of variability in responses, are relatively low, ranging from 0.744 to 1.336. This suggests that there is a relatively high level of agreement among respondents regarding the positive influence of public participation in project governance. These findings suggest that public participation has a significant and consistent positive impact on the implementation of county government projects in Makueni County, as reflected in the high mean scores and low standard deviations.

#### 4.1.4 Influence of Public Participation in Project Monitoring and Evaluation

**Table 4 Weighted Mean for Monitoring and Evaluation**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Project monitoring assures that all factors that enhance implementation are in control.	87	1	5	3.26	1.688
Project monitoring and evaluation monitor quality during the implementation of effective and sound Quality Assurance.	87	1	5	4.25	1.081
Project monitoring and evaluation creates organization work flow hence appropriate implementation.	87	1	5	4.03	1.333
Project monitoring and evaluation ensures that project results are made public to all stakeholders.	87	1	5	3.85	1.709
Project monitoring and evaluation ensures dedication by project teams.	87	1	5	3.92	1.488
Project monitoring and evaluation ensures that project results are made public to all stakeholders	87	2	5	4.79	0.531

The mean values for the different aspects of project monitoring and evaluation all fall between 3.26 and 4.79, indicating a generally positive perception among the respondents. A mean score of 3.26 suggests that project monitoring assures that factors enhancing implementation are moderately under control. On the other hand, a higher mean score of 4.79 indicates that project monitoring and evaluation are seen as highly effective in ensuring project results are made public to all stakeholders. The standard deviations range from 0.531 to 1.709, indicating the degree of variation in respondent's opinions. A lower standard deviation indicates greater variability in their perceptions.

#### 4.1.5 Measure of Project Implementation

**Table 5 Weighted Mean for the Measure of Project Implementation**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Public participation ensures that the projects are implemented within the set timeframes	87	2	5	4.21	1.013
There is achievement of Makueni projects' objectives due to involvement of the public	87	1	5	4.53	1.077
Public participation fosters adherence of the projects to the specified budgets	87	2	5	4.66	0.744

Makueni county government projects are sustainable in the long run	87	1	5	4.44	1.336
There is satisfaction of the end users/beneficiaries of the projects	87	2	5	4.66	0.744
Due to public participation, there is reduction in the failure rates of the projects	87	1	5	4.44	1.336

The mean values indicate that, on average, respondents believe that public participation has a favorable impact on project implementation. The mean score for ensuring projects is implemented within set timeframes is 4.21, which suggests a high level of agreement among respondents that public participation contributes to timely project completion. Furthermore, the mean score for adherence to specified budgets is 4.66, indicating that public participation is seen as fostering financial discipline in project execution. Overall, these findings suggest that public participation plays a crucial role in the success of county government projects in Makueni County.

## 4.2 Diagnostic Tests

### 4.2.1 Correlation Analysis

**Table 6 Pearson Correlation Coefficients Analysis for Project Identification Process**

		<b>Project implementation at Makueni County</b>	<b>Project Identification Process</b>
Project implementation at Makueni County	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	87	
Project Identification Process	Pearson Correlation	.536**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	87	87

The project identification process demonstrates a strong positive correlation with Project Implementation at Makueni County (Pearson Correlation = 0.536, Sig. =0.000). This significant positive correlation indicates that as the quality and effectiveness of the project identification process improve, the likelihood of successful project implementation in the county also increases. Therefore, public involvement in project identification may play a crucial role in ensuring successful implementation.

**Table 7 Pearson Correlation Coefficients Analysis for Budget Preparation Process**

		Project implementation at Makueni County	Project Identification Process
Project implementation at Makueni County	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	87	
Budget Preparation Process	Pearson Correlation	.488**	.727**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	87	87

The budget preparation process exhibits a very strong positive with both project identification process (Pearson Correlation= 0.727, Sig.= 0.000) and project implementation at Makueni County (Pearson Correlation=0.488, Sig.= 0.000). This implies that an efficient and well-structured budget preparation process is closely linked to successful project identification and implementation. Public participation in budget preparation was a contributing factor to this correlation, emphasizing its importance.

**Table 8 Pearson Correlation Coefficients Analysis for Governance Process**

		Project implementation at Makueni County	Project Identification Process	Budget Preparation Process
Project implementation at Makueni County	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	87		
Governance Process	Pearson Correlation	.753**	.506**	.263*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.014
	N	87	87	87

Table 8 indicates that the governance process displays a strong positive correlation with project implementation at Makueni County (Pearson Correlation= 0.753, sig.= 0.000) and a positive correlation with project identification process (Pearson Correlation= 0.506, Sig.= 0.000). This suggests that effective governance practices in the county significantly impact identification and implementation. Public participation in governance decisions plays a crucial role in these correlations, highlighting the importance of transparent and accountable governance.

**Table 9 Pearson Correlation Coefficients Analysis for Monitoring & Evaluation Process**

		<b>Project implementati on at Makueni County</b>	<b>Project Identificati on Process</b>	<b>Budget Preparati on Process</b>	<b>Governan ce Process</b>	<b>Monitori ng &amp; Evaluatio n</b>
Project implementati on at Makueni County	Pearson Correlati on Sig. (2- tailed) N	1    87				
Monitoring & Evaluation	Pearson Correlati on Sig. (2- tailed) N	.436**  0.000 87	.832**  0.000 87	.778**  0.000 87	.476**  0.000 87	1   87

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

The monitoring and evaluation process shows a strong positive correlation with project implementation at Makueni County (Pearson Correlation= 0.476, Sig.= 0.000), project identification process (Pearson Correlation= 0.832, Sig. =0.000), and budget preparation process (Pearson Correlation= 0.778, Sig.= 0.000). This signifies that a robust monitoring and evaluation system is closely associated with successful project identification, budget preparation, and implementation. Public participation in this process contributes to the observed correlations, underlining the importance of involving the public in monitoring and evaluation activities.

**4.2.2 Regression Analysis**

**Table 10 Model Summary for Project Implementation**

<b>Model Summary</b>				
<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	.845 <sup>a</sup>	0.713	0.700	0.43308

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Monitoring & Evaluation, Governance Process, Budget Preparation Process, Project Identification Process*

The model demonstrates a strong relationship with an R-square value of 0.713, indicating that approximately 71.3% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the predictor variables. The adjusted R-square is 0.7000, suggesting that the model is a good fit for the data. The standard error of the estimate is 0.43308, reflecting the average distance between the observed and predicted valued.

**Table 11 ANOVA for Project Implementation**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	38.299	4	9.575	51.051	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	15.380	82	0.188		
Total	53.679	86			

*a. Dependent Variable: Project implementation at Makueni County*

*b. Predictors: (Constant), Monitoring & Evaluation, Governance Process, Budget Preparation Process, Project Identification Process*

The ANOVA model indicates that there is a significant relationship between the predictors; Monitoring and Evaluation, Governance process, budget preparation process, and project identification process, and the dependent variable (project implementation at Makueni County) as evidenced by a large F-statistic (F= 51.051) and a very low p-value (p= 0.000). The model's R-square value would help determine the proportion of the variance in project implementation explained by these predictors. The sum of squares values and degree of freedom in the table provide additional details about the model's performance in explaining the variance.

**Table 4.15 Coefficients for Project Implementation**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	-1.075	0.401			-2.684	0.009
Project Identification Process	0.148	0.115	0.146		1.284	0.203
Budget Preparation Process	0.535	0.097	0.555		5.539	0.000
Governance Process	1.042	0.098	0.761		10.657	0.000
Monitoring & Evaluation	-0.503	0.129	-0.479		-3.903	0.000

*a. Dependent Variable: Project implementation at Makueni County*

The coefficient results shows that project identification process has a relatively weak impact on project implementation, as indicated by its standardized coefficient of 0.146. this implies that improvements in project identification may not have as significant an effect on project implementation compared to other factors. Additionally, budget preparation process and governance process have a significant positive influence on project implementation, with

standardized coefficients of 0.555 and 0.761, respectively. Meanwhile, monitoring and evaluation has a significant negative influence on project implementation with a standardized coefficient of -0.479. Project identification process, on the other hand, does not have a statistically significant impact on project implementation. These findings indicate that the budget preparation and governance process play a crucial role in the successful implementation of county government projects in Makueni County, Kenya, while effective monitoring and evaluation are negatively associated with project implementation.

## **5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The study strongly concluded that public participation has a significant impact on both the identification and implementation of county government projects in Makueni County. This is supported by the Pearson Chi-square test which yielded a value of 484.540 with 168 degrees of freedom and an asymptotic significance of 0.000, suggesting a strong relationship. Majority of the participants strongly agreed that public participation during project identification helps members of the community to participate in the development of a project and that project identification through the public facilitates feasibility studies and identification of project donors.

The study also concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between project implementation and the budget preparation process. The Pearson Chi-square value is 411.431 with 182 degrees of freedom and an asymptotic significance of 0.000, while the likelihood Ratio test yielded a value of 225.452 with the same degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.016. These results suggest that there is a strong association between public participation and project implementation, indicating that public involvement significantly affects the budget preparation process in Makueni County. Additionally, the study concluded that there was a linear relationship between project implementation and the governance project. The likelihood ratio test, on the other hand, yielded a value of 178.569 with the same degrees of freedom and had a p-value of 0.558, indicating no significant association. Furthermore, a significant number of respondents strongly agree that every project is clearly planned for in terms of time and completion schedule when public participation is involved.

Moreover, the study concluded that there was a significant positive relationship between public participation on project implementation and monitoring and evaluation in Makueni County. The Pearson Chi-square test yielded a value of 474.618 with 224 degrees of freedom, and the p-value was extremely low at 0.000, suggesting a strong association between public participation and these processes. The descriptive statistics indicate that the respondents generally believed that project monitoring and evaluation played a crucial role in ensuring that project results are made public to all stakeholders, as indicated by the high number of respondents (5) strongly agreeing with the statement. The study additionally concludes that the budget preparation and governance process play a crucial role in the successful implementation of county government projects in Makueni County, Kenya, while effective monitoring and evaluation are negatively associated with project implementation.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

The study recommends a concerted effort to enhance public participation in project implementation and monitoring and evaluation within Makueni County. Establishing accessible platforms such as community forums, online portals, and regular town hall meetings is essential.

These platforms will not only encourage active involvement from residents but also foster transparency and accountability in the implementation process. Moreover, transparent and accessible communication channels will foster trust and confidence in the government's commitment to accountability and responsiveness. Furthermore, the study highlights the need to foster a culture of collaboration and partnership between the government, civil society organizations, and community-based groups in Makueni County. Joint initiatives and partnerships can leverage diverse expertise and resources, leading to more sustainable and impactful project outcomes. By facilitating meaningful engagement and cooperation, local authorities can harness the collective strengths of different stakeholders to address complex development challenges effectively.

Furthermore, the study suggests the establishment of clear guidelines and frameworks for conducting monitoring and evaluation activities in Makueni County. Standardized procedures and protocols will ensure consistency, accuracy, and reliability in data collection, analysis, and reporting, enhancing the effectiveness of evaluation efforts. By providing a structured framework for monitoring and evaluation, local authorities can streamline processes, improve data quality, and facilitate evidence-based decision-making. Moreover, clear guidelines will also promote accountability and transparency, as stakeholders will have a common understanding of expectations and responsibilities throughout the evaluation process.

Additionally, the study highlights the importance of fostering trust and mutual respect between government officials and community members in Makueni County. Building strong relationships based on transparency, integrity, and accountability will create a conducive environment for meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and partnership. Local authorities should prioritize efforts to engage with communities in an open and respectful manner, actively listening to their concerns and incorporating feedback into decision-making processes. By cultivating trust and rapport, local authorities can establish a solid foundation for effective collaboration and sustainable development outcomes in the county. Furthermore, the study suggests the establishment of grievance redress mechanisms to address concerns and complaints raised by community members in a timely and transparent manner. Accessible channels for lodging grievances and resolving disputes will promote confidence in the project implementation process and mitigate potential conflicts. Local authorities should ensure that grievance mechanisms are well-publicized and easily accessible to all residents, providing clear guidance on how to raise concerns and seek resolution. Moreover, transparent procedures for handling grievances will demonstrate the government's commitment to accountability and responsiveness, fostering trust and confidence among stakeholders.

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