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Dynamics of Public Participation on Sustainable Resource Management in County Government of Kericho, Kenya

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Abstract— Sustainable resource management involve managing resources in a way that their sources are not depleted; so that the future generations can also benefit from it. Africa is endowed with diverse and abundant natural resources and stands at a critical juncture where responsible and sustainable management of these resources is paramount for the continent's development. The Kenyan governments (national-level and county-level) recognize the need for sustainable resource management for the good of the citizens. In devolved government units in Kenya, sustainable resource management is a critical. This study sought to assess the dynamics of public participation on sustainable resource management in county government of Kericho, Kenya. The study was guided by Resource-based view theory, administrative theory, transformational leadership theory and the theory of Planned Behaviour. This study adopted a pragmatism approach that took a practical and flexible approach, focusing on the usefulness and applicability of research findings, rather than an all-or-nothing, mutually exclusive philosophical position. A descriptive research design with a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data collections was adopted. The target population of the study comprised a total of 213 senior, middle and lower level management staff of the county government of Kericho. The Stratified random sampling was used to develop a sample from different management groups. A sample of 139 management staff was selected using Slovin's formula. Reliability of the study was ensured by conducting a pilot study in the neighbouring County Government of Nakuru while context, content and criterion validity were ascertained by the researcher in the field of study. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics which described the nature of ethical leadership and sustainable resource management. Inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation and regression analysis) were used to determine the nature of influence between the variables. This was done with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Qualitative data was analysed by themes and content analysis. The study findings revealed that, public participation had a statistically significant influence on sustainable resource management. The study concluded that there exists a strong and significant relationship between public participation (r=0.832 and p=0.000) and sustainable resource management in Kericho County, Kenya. The study recommends that in order to enhance public participation members of the public should be empowered by giving the information and documents containing information on development activities and legislations that require their input in advance so that they know and understand what they are coming to do in public forums.

Key Words— Public Participation, Sustainable Resource Management, County Government of Kericho, Kenya.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable resource management means managing resources in a way that their sources are not depleted; so that the future generations can also benefit from it (Yadav, 2020). Sustainable resource management takes the concepts from sustainability and synthesizes them with the concepts of management. (Hassine, 2019). Sustainable resource management is often as a result of social and human activities which guarantee the continuation of benefits in the long run (Kramar, 2014).

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Africa, endowed with diverse and abundant natural resources, stands at a critical juncture where responsible and sustainable management of these resources is paramount for the continent's development. The effective governance of these resources varies across countries due to differing policies, institutions, and approaches, (Amponsah, Okoh & Essumang, 2020). For example, Ghana, known for its gold and mineral wealth, has strived to balance resource extraction with environmental conservation. South Africa is renowned for its mineral resources, including platinum, gold and coal. The country's regulatory framework emphasizes environmental protection and social responsibility in resource extraction.

Egypt's resource management centers on the Nile River, a lifeline for the country's water supply and agriculture.

Kenya stands out for its innovative approach to sustainable resource management, particularly in the energy sector. Kenya's Vision 2030 outlines ambitious goals for renewable energy development, which align with the country's efforts to combat climate change and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The African Development Bank reported that in 2019, Kenya derived about 48% of its energy from renewable sources, showcasing its commitment to a sustainable energy mix, (Ministry of Energy, Republic of Kenya, 2019). Kenya is strategizing for industrial development by use of renewable energy. This is very essential for creation of employment opportunities for the large number of unemployed youths graduating from various colleges and universities.

The Kenyan governments (national-level and county-level) recognize the need for sustainable resource management for the good of the citizens. Kenya's 2010 constitution sought to establish a fairer way of managing public resources in a sustainable manner. The constitution acknowledged that a new way of resource management was necessary where aspects of environmental, societal and economic were not to be compromised. It has been noted that sustainable resource management enhance the image of the organization (Goel, 2015). In a competitive environment in organizations, sustainability should be the most fundamental goal (Mazur, 2016).In Kenya , resources are so limited that there is a high need to use sustainably so that it benefits the biggest growing population.

County resources are assets in a county that help meet the needs of those around them. These assets can be human resources, natural resources and financial resources. County resources cover a wide range of things that's potentially helping the community in that county, (Goel, 2015). This could be anything as long as it provides assistance or a service to the members of the local community. County resources can be used to improve the quality of community life (Yadav, 2020). County resources can be essential in helping the people access assistance and expand their range of outlets of support to meet their needs. County resources help build stronger, more resilient individuals and communities if only that they are utilized efficiently and effectively.

Ethical leadership is a way of influencing workforce through values, principles and beliefs that widely verge on the acknowledged standards in the conglomerate practices (Buble, 2012). Ethics is a Greek philosophical word, which means custom, character or conduct. Ethical leadership is the showing of normatively proper direction through close activities and relational connections (Hsin-Kuang, Chun-Hsiung & Dorjgotov, 2012).
Through their destinations, goals and activities on issues identified with specialized, monetary or human resource factors, they straightforwardly or by implication influence the government assistance of various individuals in the general public. They are affecting the future, for their associations as well as for individuals who work for them, buyers who utilize their items, and investors who may have put their reserve funds in the organization, and for the general public in general. Every one of these individuals ought to have the option to confide in the supervisors' decisions. This implies every chief needs to turn into their own ethical logician, and apply moral reasoning and standards to the choices they make (Alsagoff, 2017).

In devolved government units in Kenya, majority of the leaders are unethical with most of them involved in irregular public procurement which is subject to rampant corruption and bribery. According to data from the Kericho County Land and Environment Court (2022) seventy-five (75) land-related disputes were recorded in the past year, reflecting the growing tension over resource allocation. According to Office of the Auditor General (2021), Kericho County was faced with a challenge of financial resource mismanagement (under-invoicing of rates, un-collected rates, rent arrears, under-collection of statutory fees) and unexplained variance on the use of goods and services in its 2022/2023 financial year. Kericho County government's employment practices violated Section 7 of the National Cohesion and Integration Act, 2008, with 90% (2280 out of 2530) of permanent employees belonging to the local dominant community, exceeding the allowed one-third threshold (AOG, 2023). Use of ethical leadership can help in better management of the county resources in a sustainable manner. It is however not clear if ethical leadership can guarantee the same outcomes that it does in other organizations whose structure is different from devolved county governance. Influence of organizational workforce through values, principles and beliefs that widely verge on the acknowledged standards on county government resources management (human, physical and intangible items as well as finance) has not been previously documented.

Sustainable resource management is a critical aspect of governance that involves balancing economic development, environmental conservation, and social equity to ensure the well-being of present and future generations. Kericho County, located in the Rift Valley region of Kenya, is renowned for its tea production, fertile lands, and picturesque landscapes. However, despite its abundant natural resources, the county faces several challenges in sustainable resource management, which are intricately linked to issues of ethical leadership. The purpose of this study was to determine the dynamics of public participation on sustainable resource management in county government of Kericho, Kenya.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a pragmatism approach that took a practical and flexible approach, focusing on the usefulness and applicability of research findings, rather than an all-or-nothing, mutually exclusive philosophical position. A descriptive research design was adopted. The target population of the study was two hundred and thirteen (213). This included all officers/management staff of the county government of Kericho. According to County Public Service Board of Kericho; Departmental /

ministerial heads were ten (10), Middle level management Officers were one hundred and one (101) and lower-level management workers were one hundred and two (102) of Kericho County Government.

Proportionate stratified sampling was employed when selecting a representative sample per management groups. The Slovins' formula was used to develop the sample size in the study as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

Where: n = sample size
N = population size
e = margin of error
1 = is a constant value

$$n = \frac{213}{1+213(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{213}{1.5325}$$

$$n = 138.9$$

$$= 139$$

Using the above formula, a sample of one hundred and thirty-nine (139) management staff was selected. The researcher used two types of data collection instruments which included questionnaire and interview schedule to collect data for this study. Interview schedule was used to collect data from Departmental/Ministerial heads. Middle and lower level management staff were issued with standard Questionnaire. The questionnaire in this study was validated through application of content validity. The instrument was pilot tested using 30 (thirty) officers/management staff of the county government of Nakuru who included departmental or ministerial heads, Middle and lower-level management staff. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach alpha coefficient where a coefficient of 0.7 and above was acceptable (Kothari, 2014).

The collected data was both quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative data was analyzed using themes where content analysis was used. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations) helped in describing variables under investigation. Inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis) was used to establish the nature of influence amongst variables. A significance level of 95 percent confidence interval was used.

Table 1. Sample Size

Management Group	Frequency	Sample Size	Percent
Department/Ministries Heads	10	7	4.7
Middle-level management staff	1 01	66	47.4
Lower-Level Management Staff	102	66	47.9
Total	213	139	100.0

Source; Field Data (2023)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

The subjects for the study comprised the middle and lower-level management staff of the county government of Kericho. The study gathered information on the respondents' personal attributes. These attributes encompassed the gender, age, academic qualification, job title, job category and duration worked.

3.1.1 Respondents' Gender

The researcher sought to determine the gender distribution of the respondents. The results on the gender of the respondents are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' Gender

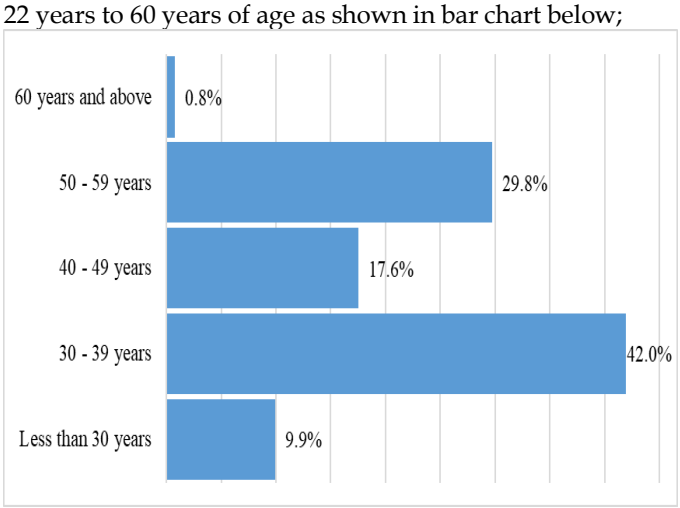
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	66	50.4
Male	65	49.6
Total	**131**	**100.0**

Source; Field Data 2023.

The results show that 66 (50.4%) of the respondents were female while 65 (49.6%) of the respondents were male. This implies that there was gender balance among the respondents who participated in the research study. Therefore, majority of the respondents were female.

3.1.2 Age of Respondents

The Respondents' age was clustered in interval range from 22 years to 60 years of age as shown in bar chart below;



Note: Minimum = 22; Maximum = 60; Mean = 41.04; Standard deviation = 9.9

Figure 1. Respondents' Age Brackets.

Source; Field Data 2023.

The results indicate that Majority (42.0%) of the total respondents were aged 30 - 39 years. About 29.8% of the total respondents were aged 50 - 59 years while (17.6%) of the total respondents were aged 40-49 years and less than 30 years (9.9%) of the total respondents. There were very few respondents aged 60 years and above as represented by 0.8% of the total responses. This is as shown in Figure 1.

3.1.3 Respondents' Academic Qualification

The Respondents were categorized into the following Academic Qualification; Primary and Secondary, Diploma,

Undergraduate, Master and Doctorate (PhD). The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents' Academic Qualification

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary/secondary	31	23.7	23.7
Diploma	41	31.3	55
Undergraduate	44	33.6	88.5
Masters	14	10.7	99.2
Doctorate(PhD)	1	0.8	100
Total	**131**	**100**	

Source Field Data 2023.

The Largest population of the study reveals that 44(33.6%) of the respondents had undergraduate level of education. The second was 41(31.3%) of the respondents had diploma level of education while 31(23.7%) had primary/secondary level of education. It was only 14(10.7%) of the respondents who had masters and only 1(0.8%) respondent had PhD level of education. The above data, repeals that the county public service have most of the employees who possess Undergraduate and Diploma qualifications. The county government does not prefer the services of employees with Doctorate (PhD) qualifications.

3.1.4 Respondents' Job Categories

This study comprised of respondents who were in lower and middle level management. This is as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Respondents' Job Categories

Job Categories	Frequency	Percent
Lower-level management staff	61	46.6
Middle level management staff	70	53.4
Total	**131**	**100**

Source; Field Data 2023.

The Respondents job categories repeals that; Majority 70 (53.4%) of the respondents were middle level management staff and 61 (46.6%) of the respondents were lower-level management staff. The results indicate that the County Government have proportionate distribution of workers in the varies categories of the job groups.

3.1.5 Number of Years (duration) Worked

The researcher took to survey the sample of the population on the period in which the respondents have served in the devolved County Government of Kericho. The data collected is as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Duration of Years Worked

Duration in years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5 years	57	43.5	43.5
5 - 10 years	35	26.7	70.2
11-15 years	22	16.8	87.0
More than 15 years	17	13.0	100.0
Total	**131**	**100**	

Note: Minimum = 2; Maximum = 35; Mean = 9.69; Standard deviation = 7.89

Source; Field Data 2023.

The data displayed repealed that the majority of the respondents had worked for a duration of less than 5 years as represented by 57(43.5%) of the total respondents. Furthermore 35(26.7%) of the respondents had worked for 5 – 10 years. A few respondents had worked for 11-15 years were 22 (16.8%) and the smallest number of employees had worked more than 15 years were 17(13%). The lowest period the employees had served the devolved County Government of Kericho was only two years, the average duration of years served was 9.69 years and the highest number of employees had served in the defund local Authorities as civic employees. Most of the former local authority workers were transferred to the currently County Government of Kericho, Kenya. The employees who have worked for less than five (5) years were employed by the current county government of Kericho.

3.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results

3.2.1 Public Participation

This study sought to analyze the influence of public participation on sustainable resource management in devolved county government of Kericho, Kenya. In pursuing this objective an analysis was done using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations)

Frequency of Public engagement in resource management

Respondents were requested to indicate how often the county government engaged the members of the public in resource management and the results was summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Frequency of Public Engagement Exercises

Frequency of public engagement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	29	22.1	22.1
Very few times	69	52.7	74.8
Often	14	10.7	85.5
Very often	19	14.5	100.0
Total	**131**	**100.0**	

Source; Field Data 2023.

The frequency of public engagement exercises showed that, majority of the respondents cited that public engagement on resource management by the county government was done very few times as represented by 69(52.7%) of the total responses. About 29(22.1%) of the respondents indicated that the county government never engaged the public in resource management. Those who indicated that public engagement exercise was often and very often comprised 14(10.7%) and 19(14.5%) respectively. This analyzed data repeals that the county government does not have attention so furriest as public engagements exercises are concerned.

Public Participation Platforms by the County Government

This study was interested with the different ways in which the county government conducted public participation. The various public participation platforms explored by the county government are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Methods of Public Participation

Public Participation Platforms	Frequency	Percentage
Public Barraza	61	46.6
Local Radio Stations and TV Station	31	23.7
Posters	35	26.7
Newspaper	5	3.8
Public Address	1	0.8

Source; Field Data 2023.

The tabulation of methods of public participation are displayed on the above table. This reveals that the majority of the respondents 61 (46.6%) indicated that public Barraza were the most popular platforms used by the county government in its conduct of public participation. Those who indicated the use of posters as public participation platform comprised 35(26.7%). This was closely followed by respondents who indicated the use of radio and TV stations as represented by 31(23.7%) of the total responses. The results also reveal that 5 (3.8%) of the respondents indicated the use of newspapers platforms. Other platforms included public address where only 1(0.8 %) of Respondents responded. From the results, majorly shows that the use of Public Baraza is very effective method of conducting Public Participation within the area of jurisdiction of the county government of Kericho.

County Government Rating on Public Participation

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a set of statements on public participation. The results are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: County Government Rating on Public Participation

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
The county government conduct forums on all issues regarding public resources management	25 (19.1)	53 (40.5)	21 (16)	22 (16.8)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.53	1.198
The opinion of the members of the public is considered in making key decision.	25 (19.1)	58 (44.3)	17 (13)	20 (15.3)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.50	1.205
Members of the public are considered in resource management	23 (17.6)	60 (45.8)	17 (13)	20 (15.3)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.51	1.192
Members of the public have a sense of ownership on the county funded projects.	22 (16.8)	57 (43.5)	22 (16.8)	19 (14.5)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.54	1.178
Overall							**2.521**	**1.164**

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree (1), D=Disagree (2), U=Undecided (3), A=Agree (4) and SA= Strongly Agree (5)
Source; Field Data 2023.

Most of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 'The county government conduct forums on all issues regarding public resources management'. While a cumulatively of 78(59.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, only 32 (24.4%) cumulatively agreed. Specifically, those who disagreed were 53(40.5%). An additional 25(19.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement. About 21 (16 %) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 22 (16.8%) and 10(7.6%), respectively.

The Head of a department for public participation and citizenry (Interviewee coded number 01 of 24th April 2023) during the interview on ethical issues held that:

> *There is a feeling among members of the public that the county government does not conduct forums on all issues regarding the resources they are entrusted with by the Kenya Constitution 2010. Most policy makers are not ethical in term of governance and they always compromised with corrupt employees to defraud the devolved unity (county government of Kericho).*

The findings are in consistence with those of Wiktor and Szromnik, (2018) who found that the government conduct meaningful public participation which involves seeking public input at the specific points in the decision process and on the specific issues where public input has a real potential to help shape the decision or action. Sometimes the opportunity for influence is quite small, while at other times the public can have a great deal of influence. The amount of this potential influence is the main consideration in designing a successful public participation program.

Most of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 'The opinion of the members of the public are considered in making key decision'. While a cumulatively of 83 (63.4%)) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, only 31 (23.7%) cumulatively agreed. Specifically, those who disagreed were 58 (44.3%.) An additional 25 (19.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement, while 17 (13%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 20(15.3%) and 11 (8.4%), respectively.

The study results are inconsistent with those of Kobia and Bogaka (2019) who found that many decisions made for the public good benefit from engaging the public as those decisions are discussed. When governing boards, community groups and organizations involve community members, decisions are better informed and solutions more strongly address community concerns. The results are also consistent with Usadol and Caldwell (2016) who found that mutual understanding through sustained collaborative relationships among the stakeholders enhanced implementation of rural development projects. Therefore, public participation is a key ingredient to prudent use of public resources.

Most of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 'Members of the public are considered in resource

management'. While a cumulatively of 83 (63.4%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, only 31 (23.7%) cumulatively agreed. Specifically, those who disagreed were 20 (45.8%). An additional 11(17.6%) strongly disagreed with the statement, while 17 (13%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 20 (15.3 %) and 11 (8.4%), respectively.

The Head of department for public service management (Interviewee coded number 02 of 24th April 2023) was interviewed by the researcher using the interview schedule provided asserted the following on Independent Variable-Public Participation;

> *The process of public participation in the distribution of resource is ineffective and doesn't result to fair distribution of resources. Most resources are allocated according to regional block as represented by the number of votes casted to the sitting political leaders. Public participation was done only to satisfy the provision of the law and constitution but the decision makers and management do not take into account the inputs of the members of the public who are the recipients of the development.*

The study findings agree with those of Drijver (2015) who focused on public resource management in Sudan and found that beside the traditional resource management in institutions, a large number of local (modern) institutions were established with the aim of mobilizing local resources in resource management and in development. These institutions include: Village Councils, Village Development Committees or Popular Committees which are involved in resource management.

This study is consistent with Wanyera (2015) who investigated the influence of community participation on sustainability of community-based projects. The study found that community participation as presented in various aspects significantly influenced sustainability of community-based projects. Community participation in pre-project phases had the most significant influence compared participation in project implementation phases. The study findings are also inconsistent with those Omari, (2016) who found that in the field of environmental and resource management, donor - funded projects adopted community participation approaches. These activities of community participation have produced a wide range of results and changes in government attitudes towards local people's participation in natural resource management.

Most of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 'Members of the public have a sense of ownership on the county funded projects. This is a cumulatively of 71 (60.3%)of the respondents disagreed with the statement, while 30 (22.9%) a cumulatively agreed. Specifically, those who disagreed were 57 (43.5%). An additional 22 (16.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The population of the respondents 22 (16.8%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 19 (14.5%) and 11 (8.4%), respectively.

This study agrees with Khalili and Jafari (2014) who found that public awareness factors were very important in sustainable natural resource management as noted from the natural resource management experts in India. Community awareness is achieved through public participation. It is therefore necessary to promote public participation in order to achieve sustainable natural resource management.

The respondents overall rating of the extent of county government support of public participation was computed as a mean of 2.521 with a standard deviation of 1.164. The county government was rated highest with respect to sense of ownership on the county funded projects by the members of the public (mean of 2.54). The county government ratings on public participation based on other parameters was as follows: conduct of forums on issues regarding public resources management (mean of 2.53); consideration of the members of the public in resource management (mean of 2.51); and, consideration of the members of the public in making key decision (mean of 2.50).

The Head of department for Public Participation and Citizenry (Interviewee coded number 03 of 2023) was interviewed by the researcher on Independent Variable-Public participation using the interview schedule earlier prepared. The following was the summery of his recorded opinions;

> *Members of the public feel that they are not actively involved in making decision regarding the distribution of resources within the county. The management of the resources of the county government is entirely the preserve of the county governor, executive committee members, the chief officers and the county directors of the ten departments as established by the county government Act and the constitution of Kenya 2010., At the county Assembly level , the members of county Assembly , the speaker of the Assembly and the county clerk are solely made accountable for decision over the allocation of all the county government resources.*

Goldberg & Bryant (2018) who found that in Africa most of the government funded projects are owned by the community, it is this benefits that play a critical role in the level of involvement and subsequent ownership of most government funded projects in Africa.

According Wignaraja, (2019) the involvement of people in decisions concerning the environment where they live is critical. The concept partly reflects the observation that people who inhabit an environment over time are often the ones ablest to make decisions about its sustainable use. Where assistance or support might be needed these same people should not be seen as passive recipients of information and outside expertise with nothing to offer in return. It stems from the fact that people already have the knowledge; what they must have are the rights over their local environments.

3.2.2 Sustainable Resource management

Respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on a set of statements on sustainable resource management. The results are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Sustainable Resource management

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
There's equitable distribution of job opportunities	19 (14.5)	69 (52.7)	16 (12.2)	16 (12.2)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.47	1.139
Resources are allocated equitably	15 (11.5)	72 (55)	17 (13)	16 (12.2)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.51	1.112
Resources are allocated based assessed needs	18 (13.7)	68 (51.9)	17 (13)	17 (13)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.50	1.139
Resources are distributed based on the population size	19 (14.5)	68 (51.9)	17 (13)	17 (13)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.47	1.125
County projects benefits the local community most	20 (15.3)	70 (53.4)	14 (10.7)	16 (12.2)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.45	1.145
There is prudent utilization of available resources	18 (13.7)	71 (54.2)	16 (12.2)	16 (12.2)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.46	1.111
County resources are not utilized for personal gains	20 (15.3)	69 (52.7)	16 (12.2)	16 (12.2)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.44	1.124
Overall							**2.473**	**1.097**

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree (1), D=Disagree (2), U=Undecided (3), A=Agree (4) and SA= Strongly Agree (5)
Source; Field Data 2023.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'There's equitable distribution of job opportunities' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 88 (67.2%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 27 (20.6%) of the respondents cumulatively agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 69 (52.7%) and 19 (14.5%), respectively. About 16 (12.2%) were undecided respondents. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 16 (12.2%) and 11 (8.4%), respectively.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'Resources are allocated equitably ' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 87 (66.5%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 27(20.6%) of the respondents cumulatively agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 72 (55%) and 15 (11.5%,) respectively. About 17(13%) proportion of the respondents were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 17(13%) and 11 (8.4 %), respectively.

The study findings are in tandem with those of Paolo (2017) who found that equal distribution of resources provides a social security net which may include education, housing, sustenance, healthcare etc. Without ensuring equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth, the welfare of the marginalized and deprived sections of society cannot be ensured.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'Resources are allocated based assessed needs ' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 86 (65.6%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 28 (21.4%) agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 68 (51.9%) and 18 (13.7%), respectively. About 17 (13%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 17 (13%) and 11 (8.4%) respectively.

The study findings are in tandem with those of Kalniri and Sewe (2012) who agreed that resource allocation arises as an issue because the resources of a society are in limited supply, whereas human wants are usually unlimited, and because any given resource can have many alternative uses, hence resources are allocated based on the needs assessed in the community.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'Resources are distributed based on the population size' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 87 (66.4%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 27 (20.6%) agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 68 (51.9%) and 19 (14.5%), respectively. About 17 (13%) of the statement comprised 17 (13%) and 10 (7.6%), respectively.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'County projects benefits the local community most' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 90 (68.7%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 27 (20.6%) agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 70 (53.4%) and 20 (15.3%), respectively. About 14 (10.7%) of the respondents were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 16 (12.2%) and 11 (8.4%), respectively.

The study findings conquer with those of Orange, (2014) who find that community benefits from development looks at how publicly funded projects such as stadiums can be structured to provide the most benefits to local residents. Best value contracting, local hiring, apprenticeship programs, health benefits for workers, and using small and minority contractors are ways to make large public works projects not only important amenities but true engines of economic and workforce development.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'There is prudent utilization of available resources' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 89 (67.9%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 26 (19.8%) agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 71 (54.2%) and 18 (13.7%), respectively. About 16 (12.2%) of the respondents were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 16 (12.2%) and 10 (7.6%), respectively.

According to Sofia, (2015). The prudent use of resources means ensuring that we use them wisely and efficiently, in a way that respects the needs of future generations. This means enabling more sustainable consumption and production and using non-renewable resources in ways that do not endanger the resource or cause serious damage or pollution.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'County resources are not utilized for personal gains' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 89 (68%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 26 (19.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 69 (52.7%) and 20 (15.3%), respectively. About 16 (12.2%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 16 (12.2%) and (10 (7.6%), respectively.

According to Zulu & Kalipeni, (2016) the county leaders may not use their official position, including information learned by virtue of the position, for their personal benefit or for the benefit of others. An employee may not use their public office for their own private gain or for that of persons or organizations with which they are associated personally. An employee's position or title should not be used to coerce; to endorse any product, service or enterprise; or to give the appearance of governmental sanction.

The respondents overall rating of sustainable resource management in the county was a mean of 2.473 with a standard deviation of 1.097. The county was rated highest on equitable allocation of resources (mean of 2.51) and resource allocation based on assessed needs (mean of 2.50). the respondents rating of sustainable resource allocation based on other parameters were as follows: equitable distribution of job opportunities (mean of 2.47); distribution of resources based on the population size (mean of 2.47); prudence in utilization of available resources (mean of 2.46); benefits of county projects to the local community (mean of 2.45); and, non-utilization of county resources for personal gains (mean of 2.44)

The Head of Department for Public Service Management (Interviewee coded number 07 of 2023) during an interview with the researcher made the following observations on the dependent variable -Sustainable resource management;

> *There is no equitable distribution of job opportunities. Most employments are done in the region or wards where the County Governor, the Honorable Speaker of the County Assembly and the chairman of the public service board. The resources are not allocated equitably and also not based on assessed needs. The regions where the members of County Assembly (MCAs) are political powerful and highly connected to the County Governor and members of County Executive Committee (CEC). The same resources are not distributed based on the population size and there is no prudent utilization of available resources due to the prevailing corruption among the workers and members of the public. The renewable and non-renewable resources should be managed efficiently.*

3.3 Correlation Analysis Results

An overview of the correlation evaluations conducted is provided in this section. It aims to show the degree of the independent variable' associations with the dependent variable as well as their degree of interdependence.

Table 10 Correlation Analysis Results: Public Participation and Sustainable Resource management

Statistics	Value
Pearson Correlation	.832*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	131

Source; Field Data 2023.

The findings indicated that r=0.832 and p=0.000. This indicated that there exists a strong and statistically significant relationship between public participation and sustainable resource management in Kericho County, Kenya. This study agrees with Washtina (2015) who found that community involvement in identifying projects significantly influenced the implementation of projects funded by donors. Community participation in administration of projects positively influenced the success of project implementation. The results in this study also agree with Njogu (2016) who found that stakeholder involvement was key in project performance. Involvement in project planning enhances stakeholder's control of project activities and eventually better performance. The study results are consistent with Temba (2015) who found that stakeholders' participation was effective in promoting sustainability of donor funded projects, noting a major contribution of stakeholders' participation in resource mobilization.

3.4 Regression Analysis Results

A bivariate regression analysis was conducted on the relationships between the independent variable on the dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 11.

The linear regression results show that the coefficient for public participation (0.832) was positive and statistically at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated t-value of 17.031 is greater than the critical value and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05

$Y = 0.496 + 0.832X_1$

Table 11: Coefficients from the Bivariate Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.496	.128		3.880	.000
	Public Participations	.784	.046	.832	17.031	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Resource Management

3.5 Hypotheses Test Results

The Hypotheses test results were conducted using the p-values approach at 95% confidence level. The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis when the p-value is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis in this study stated that "public participation has no statistically significant influence on sustainable resource management in devolved county government of Kericho, Kenya". The findings revealed that the p value was 0.000 which was less than the 0.05 therefore the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that public participation has a positive and statistically significant influence on sustainable resource management in devolved county government of Kericho, Kenya. Greater public participation significantly improves sustainable resource management.

This study is consistent with Ochieng (2016) who established that community participation has a positive influence on project sustainability in Mara Basin, Kenya. The community used methods such as ensuring water security, conservation of water basin, conflict resolution, water allocation and permitting for the purpose of project sustainability. Participation is a key instrument in enhancing self-reliance and community empowerment. This study agrees with Mueke and Alelah (2017) who found that community participation had a positive influence on the sustainability of projects. For this reason, communities should be involved in the establishment, implementation and evaluation of projects at all stages.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

From the findings the study concluded that members of the public are considered in resource management, the study also concluded that members of the public have a sense of ownership on the county funded projects. Public awareness factors were very important in sustainable natural resource management. Community awareness is achieved through public participation. Community awareness is achieved through public participation. It is therefore necessary to promote public participation in order to achieve sustainable natural resource management. The study also concluded that that there exists a strong and significant relationship between public participation and sustainable resource management in Kericho County, Kenya. (r=0.832 and p=0.000).

4.2 Recommendations

In order to enhance public participation members of the public should be empowered by giving the information and documents containing information on development activities and legislations that require their input in advance so that they know and understand what they are coming to do in public forums. There should also be continuous communication and dissemination of information on what is going on in the county, engage the right stakeholders especially the opinion leaders and experts, have good timing of public participation meetings so has to have key stakeholders attending, formulate/have civic education bill/laws and assembly to be in touch with the public by use of media and public barazas.

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