

DETERMINANTS OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POLICY FORMULATION: A CASE OF TRANS NZOIA COUNTY

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Abstract: The Constitution of Kenya 2010 completely changed the way public participation is done in the country. It introduced a new legal framework and institutions to ensure transparency, accountability and citizen participation in formulation of public policies. Nevertheless, even with such legislations and framework on paper, county governments are still ineffective and inefficient in initiating and advancing policy formulation activities, most probably because of lack of formal structures, political influence, socio economic factors and low awareness levels on the part of the citizens. While there is almost universal acceptance of the principle of citizen participation in democratic societies, the means and extent of this participation are frequently contested. In Trans Nzoia County for instance, the presence of legally binding regulations for public participation has not translated into meaningful practice. The purpose of this study therefore was to assess the extent to which participatory governance has taken root at the local level, as well as the capacity of the County Government to promote this agenda; it sought to assess the influence of public participation in efficient policy formulation in Trans Nzoia County - Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were; to determine the role of institutional structures on public participation in policy formulation, to establish the influence of politics on effective public participation in policy formulation, to establish the influence of socio-economic status on public participation in policy formulation and to find out the extent to which citizen awareness influence public participation in decision making. Descriptive survey research design was applied in the study. The target population of the research was over 10,000 opinion leaders, 75 administrative leaders (Sub-County Administrators, Ward Administrators, and Chiefs) in Trans Nzoia County. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the administrative leaders while stratified random sampling was used to select opinion leaders. The sample size of 179 respondents was determined using Magnani formula. Questionnaires and interview guides were employed for data collection. The data collected from questionnaires was coded, cleaned and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 23. The results of the study were presented in form of tables and figures. The study findings revealed that Institutional structures positively influenced citizen awareness and participation in the policy formulation process, Politics positively influenced institutional structures, citizen awareness and public participation, citizen awareness positively influenced public participation in policy formulation but the influence was not as significant while socio-economic status had the least significant influence on public participation in policy formulation. The most preferred and effective means of communication to reach the population was radio/TV, social media and posters/newspapers in Trans Nzoia County. The results will act as a basis for policy formulation to planners, especially the county government, in future endeavours to rope in citizens in public participation and general development projects of the county

Keywords: Institutional structures, local politics, socio economic status, citizens awareness and public participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Policy formulation is a fundamental activity of any government the world over. Through the process, governments are able to translate the use of physical resources to meet national priorities and fulfill their promise to the electorate. Citizens on their part expect the process of making policies to be fair, transparent, and equitable (OECD, 2007). A decade ago, the thinking on policy formulation advocated for a process that was undertaken exclusively by technocrats, policy makers and academics in government ministries. The preference was to carry out a process devoid of 'politics' (World Bank, 2002). Studies conducted by Haggard and Webb (1994) argue that for this reason, politicians delegated decision making authority to technocrats who were insulated from pressure and interference from interest groups, the legislature and bureaucratic processes. Empirical findings on this matter were contrary to this argument. Studies by the World Bank (2002) found out that a more inclusive approach with key stakeholders including the public would enhance the sustainability of policies and improve their prospects for implementation success. Involving people in making decisions that concern their lives is an important feature of democratic societies. This view is shared by Muhammadi *et al.*, (2010) who asserts that public participation is based on the democratic system to protect the rights of individuals and the public interest and is seen as one of the important elements of democratic governments. Generally public participation seeks and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision. The principle of public participation holds that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process (Moseti, 2010)

Global Perspective

Fox and Meyer (1995) contend that participation of citizens encourages a bottom-up approach to public policy-making and policy implementation. OECD (2001) further asserts that public participation is part of people centered or human centric principles, which have emerged in Western culture over the last thirty years, and has had some positive bearings on education, business, public policy and international relief and development programs. In this respect OECD (2001) concludes that public participation may challenge the concept that big is better and the logic of centralized hierarchies, advancing alternative concepts of more heads are better than one, arguing that public participation can sustain productive, meaningful and durable change.

In the last two decades some Latin American countries have implemented participatory policy formulation as a way of incorporating citizens' perspectives into policy making in order to increase citizens' right to participate and enhance transparency. Some of these countries include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Dominican republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. By the year 2007, 2,500 local governments in these countries were implementing participatory policy making with great success (ELLA, 2012).

While reviewing approaches to public participation and how citizen input improve performance of public programs in Denmark, the Philippines, Canada and the United Kingdom, Neshkova *et al.* (2012) and Marzuki (2015), concluded that although administrative costs that come with the exercise can be high, public participation can very well be associated with proper policy formulation if the citizenry is well informed and is ready to participate. Marzuki (2015) added that the inclusion of citizens has broader social value related to the performance of public programs. By opening their decision making processes to the public and taking advantage of the contextual knowledge and practical advice it has to offer, public agencies entrusted with policy formulation can be seen to be improving in efficiency and effectiveness.

Regional Perspective

In view of the foregoing, public participation in the making and implementation of policy is indispensable for sustaining democracy and promoting good local governance and administration. This has been tried either partially or is in full operation in some African countries, like South Africa, Ghana, Morocco, Libya (during MuhamarGadhafi's' reign), and Botswana. It is an active process in which participants take initiative and action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control. According to Moseti (2010), participation serves as an instrument for closing the gap between local government, civil society, private sector and the general community by developing a common understanding about a local situation, priorities and programs.

In the quest to improve the operations and success of governance, governments have shifted from the centralized and government being the source of policies and services to decentralized and the public participating in policy formulation. A

decentralized mechanism of governance is viewed by both researchers and administrators as the solution to improving the constraints faced in centralized service delivery, (Robinson, 2007). Azfaret *al*, (1999) goes further to state that decentralization involves the central government transferring to lower-level governments, financial, administrative and political powers. Consequently, the adoption of decentralization is appearing to be the trend in governance and public administration in the continent and also in the world as a whole, judging by the sizeable number and the ever increasing number of countries (in Africa) applying it in governance in the last three decades. As such, in the period 1980-2005, over 75 countries across the world have tried to make use of decentralization in order to empower their citizens.

Local Perspective

The Kenyan governance system has emerged from a unilateral and top-down approach by national government to decentralization of political powers and resources from the central government to the devolved units. Over the years and during the clamor for a new constitution and subsequent devolution, Kenyans made public participation an important principle in which they sought to underpin the governance of public affairs by citizens (ESRC, 2013). Public participation became an important theme in debates on governance in Kenya. Because of this, and in recognition of protracted struggles for democratic reforms that had taken place over the years, article 10 of Kenya's new constitution enacted in 2010 included democracy and participation of the people among the values and principles of governance, which bind all state organs and institutions as well as state officials (Kanyinga, 2014). Further still, Chapter 11 of the constitution, which addresses devolved governments, specifically spells out the importance of citizen participation in the affairs of the county governments (CoK 2010). Kenya thus was among the first countries in Africa, beside South Africa to make public participation in policy formulation a constitutional requirement (ESRC, 2013). Upon the advent of devolution, county policy formulation processes were also expected to be aligned to the constitution with respect to public participation. To fulfill this expectation, County governments are required to develop guidelines on public participation (ESRC, 2013).

Additionally, Chapter 7 of the Constitution 2010 stipulates how citizens are entitled to fair representation in every sphere in Kenya. As such, the government has a responsibility of building its citizens' capacity, to enable them to fully participate in governance through civic education. According to Kanyinga (2014), the challenge is to shift the paradigm arrangement of the political system from experts and professional led model with institutional and functional separation of powers to that where citizens are fully integrated into governance. He further opines that in general, public participation seeks and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.

Statement of the Problem

Among the principles guiding devolution in the Kenyan governance system was empowering the local citizen through public participation where they are supposed to be involved in decision making on all development matters including policy formulation. Although Kenya has put in place legal instruments and policy frameworks to foster public participation in the policy formulation process at the county level, these have not been implemented fully by county governments. There is still ineffective participation of the public in policy formulation in Trans Nzoia County, contrary to the spirit of the Constitution 2010 which calls for public participation not only to take place but also to be meaningful, so that it can impact positively on the policy-making process.

Unfortunately, the presence of legally binding rules for public participation has not translated into meaningful practice. For instance, it has been found that 83% of Kenyans do not know the resources assigned to their County, with only 7% aware of their County's Fiscal Strategy Paper (CFSP), 16% aware of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), and 41% aware of the County's budget. This dismal performance is related to the finding that only 38% are aware of County meetings and only 15% attend those meetings (Transparency International, 2016). In addition, the policy on devolved system of governance, Government of Kenya (2016) acknowledges that the quality of public participation is low and has not been optimized due to low civic awareness by the citizenry, uncoordinated civic education and challenges in accessing information. It is evident that most county public participation processes take place as a formality to meet the minimum requirements of the Constitution as documented by the JRMA, (2014), thereby undermining the legitimacy of the public participation process as envisioned in the Constitution.

This ineffective participation in policy formulation has been influenced by various factors which include; institutional structures, politics, socio-economic status and lack of citizen awareness thereby leading to missed opportunity for citizens to hold their leaders to account, failure to influence the outcome of decisions on governance, derailed development and

poor governance. Therefore, if this lack of meaningful public participation in policy formulation persists, the intention of the new Constitution with regard to ensuring that citizens are involved in the governance process through public participation, and the promise it holds, will not be realized. It is for these reasons that this study seek to investigate determinants of meaningful public participation in efficient policy formulation in Trans Nzoia County.

General Objective

The overall objective for the study will be to assess the determinants of effective public participation in policy formulation in Trans Nzoia County- Kenya.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study will be:

- I. To determine the influence of Institutional Structures on Effective Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County.
- II. To establish the Influence of Politics on Effective Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County.
- III. To establish the Influence of Socio-economic Status on Effective Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County.
- IV. To find out the influence of Citizen Awareness Levels on Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County.

Research Questions

The study will seek to answer the following research questions;

- I. How do Institutional Structures influence Effective Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County?
- II. How does Politics influence Effective Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County?
- III. What is the influence Socio-economic Status on Effective Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County?
- IV. How does the Citizen Awareness Levels influence Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County?

Significance of the Study

The study will be of significance to the following:

County Government Policy Makers

The findings of this study will guide county governments in evaluating their processes in policy formulation. It will act as feedback for them to audit their processes and improve accordingly. The political class will also get feedback on how they influence public participation in policy formulation. Loop holes that contribute to ineffective public participation will be identified and effective remedy measures taken.

Academicians and Researchers

The study is important because it will inform the county government of Trans Nzoia, scholars and other researchers on how effective public participation contributes to formulation of good policies, leads to effective involvement of people in policy development and implementation, and contributes to an empowered and informed citizenry. The study will also be expected to lay a foundation for their future research. Thus, the study contributes to knowledge.

Other Stakeholders

This study is significant to other stakeholders, including the public, its local leadership and opinion leaders to demonstrate that there is practical value in participation and hence ensure that all beneficiaries and those affected by government policies can meaningfully participate in the formulation and implementation of these policies.

Scope of the Study

This study will be done in Trans Nzoia County. The study will be restricted to evaluating the influence of institutional structures, local politics, socio-economic status and citizen awareness levels on effective public participation in policy formulation?

Limitations of the Study

The data collection process had some difficulties to be encountered by the researcher from the targeted respondents because they were scattered all over the county and due to the sustained war on corruption in the country, majority of them were so skeptical as to the intention of the data to be collected from them thus they needed a lot of explanation for them to cooperate. These limitations were however mitigated through; the private car hire to ensure that all the respondents were reached either for dropping the questionnaires or for interview purposes. This was especially hectic since questionnaires were to be dropped and picked after two days.

The researcher was also assisted by the issuance of introduction letters confirming that she was a master's student at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology-Kitale CBD Campus and was actually collecting data as a requirement for the completion of her masters' degree. The researcher had also to point out that the data to be collected was to be used purely for academic purposes and that it was to be treated confidentially and identities of the respondents were also not required.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW**Introduction:**

This chapter covered literature reviewed in the past by other scholars, particularly on the concept of project management practices and their influence on project sustainability, Theoretical Framework, Conceptual Framework, Empirical and Critical Review of Literature, Research gaps and Summary.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the following three theories; Systems Theory, The Grounded Theory and The Social Learning Theory as discussed below:

System theory.

Systems Theory was founded by Jay Forrester to analyze and understand complex processes. According to Meno (2016), a system is a set of elements/parts coherently organized and interconnected in a structured pattern that produces a characteristic set of behaviors, often categorized as that systems' function or purpose. The foundation of a system lies in its state, which refers to the quantity of material or information that builds up over time in that system. Every system has a stated goal or otherwise. The discrepancies of a system are depicted in the difference between the current state and the goals of the system. Public participation in any policy formulation process is a dynamic undertaking requiring relentless decision-making. Because the constant decisions and events in the process can impact the level of inclusivity, a Systems Theory approach is a relevant framework in which to study public participation. A great deal of research has been done on the inefficient mechanisms and elements of the public participation process (Shiple and Utz, 2012; Meno, 2016). Where the system is not efficient or rather not delivering required information for decision making, changing the elements (or the most visible parts) of the system has the least effect on altering it because the changed elements still must adhere to the rules and flow paths established within that system. For example, when the people in top leadership positions manipulate the public institutions engaging the citizens in public participation, changing the institution membership without changing the top leadership may not change anything at the end of it all.

In planning, a community may change the outreach mechanism from a forum to a survey, but if the purpose of the mechanism is not changed (i.e. being more inclusive), the system of participation functions in the same manner. This phenomenon could explain why, even though many understand what mechanisms lead to greater inclusive participation, there still remain very few cases of it. While beneficial to research, these studies often ignore the broader context (the purpose and interconnections) that leads to these mechanisms or if these mechanisms would be more useful if the system's goal was different. Where the entire system is working accordingly and the citizen engagement is held to be

paramount, then citizen participation will be seen to be functioning and playing its part in policy formulation. All this can be possible where the systems are working hitchlessly, and that is why the systems theory was considered relevant for this study especially with the institution structures, politics and the citizen awareness variables.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a methodology, or strategy of inquiry, in which systematic research methods are applied in deriving a conceptual explanation of processes, actions, and interactions that are grounded in and emerged from data obtained from the participants in processes, actions, and interactions (Charmaz, 2006; Hatley, 2013). This methodology or theory was originally developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), a strategy they used for building theories from research grounded in data, in contrast to strategies that deduce hypotheses from existing theories (Charmaz, 2006; Hatley, 2013). The grounded theory methodology provides a systematic process for developing theory where no theory relevant to the specific topic already exists, and aims to allow the participants' main concern to emerge from the data (Hatley, 2013).

He further contends that the core purpose of grounded theory is not to describe and convey the research participants' stories; but rather to identify their main concern and then explain conceptually the ongoing behaviors through which the research participants seek to resolve their main concern and chart a favorable route for better governance. The variable of public participation and citizen awareness was suitably taken care of by this theory since the theory mirrors the participant motivation and organization in substantive context as they focus on resolving their main concern (Glaser, 2002). It is therefore important that when striving to involve the public in policy formulation, the leadership ought to recognize and analyze the motivations behind the participants' behaviors. Grounded theory methods is anchored on an open-ended approach in which the engagement of the citizenry moves back and forth between the data and analysis of the views of the grassroots, and often returns to the field, where necessary, to gather additional data in order to refine the available and required data for proper policy formulation (Charmaz, 2006; Hatley, 2013). For the entire process to be meaningful, the grounded theory, the committee engaging the community should simultaneously work on data collection and data analysis, while performing constant comparison among data for similarities and differences (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Hatley, 2013).

The Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory starts from Dewey's Theory of Knowledge, where he emphasized the approach of practical learning (Friedmann, 1987; Miroshnikova, 2014). Dewey idea of American politics is what encouraged him to research on social learning at the local level i.e. communities and neighborhoods (Friedmann, 1987; Miroshnikova, 2014). Friedmann (1987) avers that individuals, organizations, small groups, communities, actors and learners are the same in social learning and by focusing on this same principle he introduced transactive planning. Social Learning theory is rooted in Sears, Bandura and other researchers who sort to find out how people act in different situations and how their actions change peoples' behavior in the future (Grusec, 1992; Miroshnikova, 2014). Sears sought for answers about human behavior in psychoanalytical theory; Bandura on his part bypassed psychoanalytical ideas and instead based the theory on information-processing theory (Miroshnikova, 2014). Bandura (1977) in his findings concluded that an individual, the behavior, and the environment always influence each other. In his earlier findings as quoted by Miroshnikova (2014), he had concluded that observation, imitation and modeling are the central approaches in social learning theory, Bandura had further concluded that people also learn by observing other peoples' behavior and consequences of specific types of behavior (Bandura, 1986).

Citizen awareness variable was well covered by this theory together with its sub-areas like education, age among others since this theory opined that learning is a central element in public participation and policy-making (Miroshnikova, 2014). Policy makers in the late 1980s introduced collaborative approach in an effort to reduce disparities in the public-private sector (Gray, 1989). Collaborative learning is a new approach in the public participation process, which involves dialogue and open communication with idea-sharing (Daniels and Walker, 1996; Miroshnikova, 2014). Since citizen awareness comes with learning, and by paraphrasing Daniels and Walker (1996), learning should always be a part of the process even if it means involving high-quality and experienced personnel in the process in order to uplift citizens' awareness to high levels for better involvement. Daniels and Walker continue by quipping that "when people are actively involved in the process they are more likely to learn than when they passively observe." The two scholars concluded by positing that social learning is more about working in conflict environment but not in solving the conflict. This theory is therefore

considered to be key in studying the research variables citizen awareness, socio-economic status and public participation in policy-formulation.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explained the relationship between the predictor variables (Institutional Structures, Politics, Socio-economic Status and Citizen Awareness) and the predicted variable (Public Participation in Policy Formulation) as depicted below;

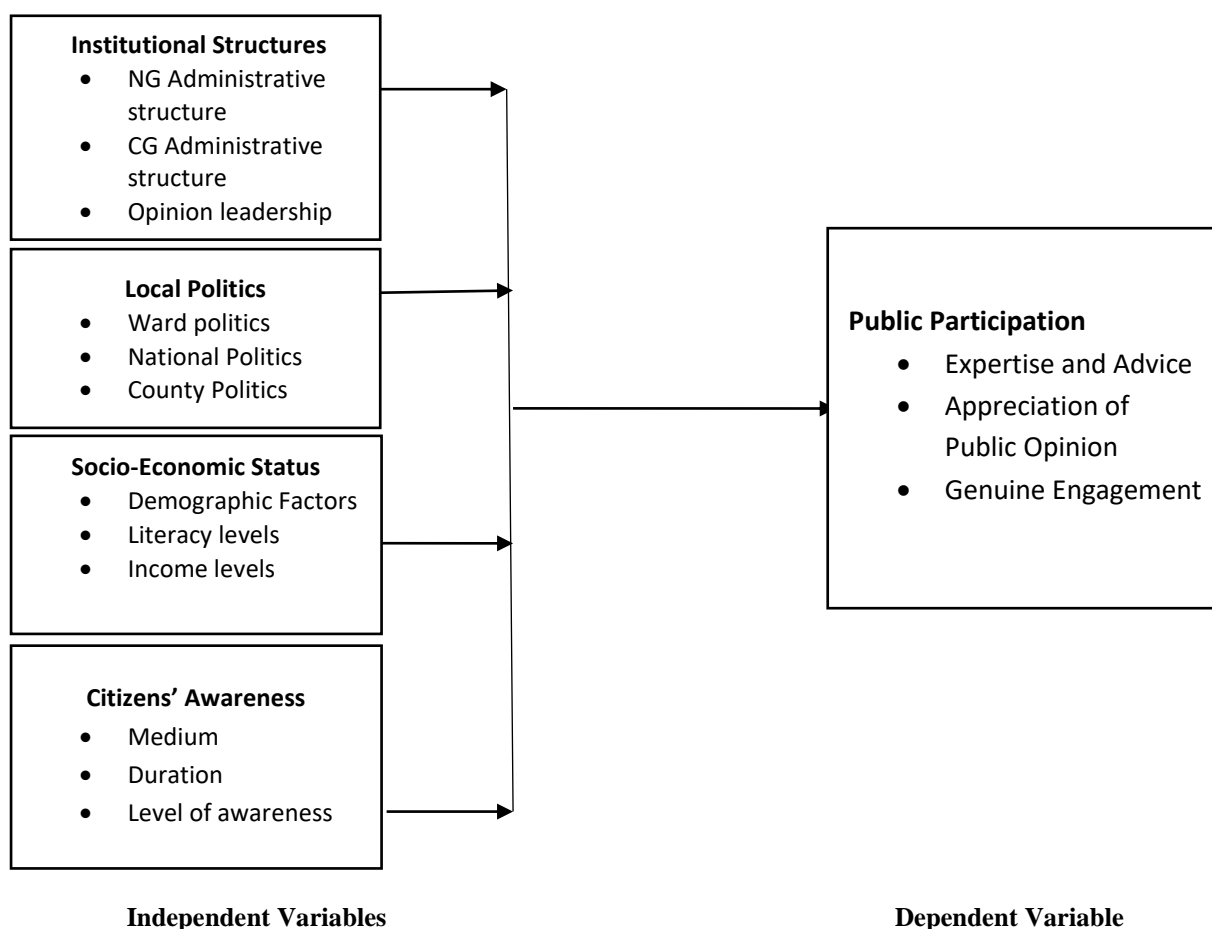


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Review of Variables

The Concept of Public Participation

According to the EIPP (2009), public participation can be described as a deliberative process by which interested or affected citizens, civil society organizations and government actors are involved in decision making before a political decision is taken. Hartay (2011) contends that the involvement of citizens in political decision-making has a number of positive effects, including the adoption of advanced decisions, increased partnership, ownership and responsibility in the implementation of decisions, as well as increased confidence in public institutions. Arnstein (1969) adds that citizen participation as 'a strategy by which they have not taken part in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated and programs are operated... simply put, citizen participation means citizen power'.

The theory and practice of public participation is increasingly concerned with placing the citizen at the centre of policymakers' considerations, not just as target, but also as agents. To that end, public servants are being exhorted to collaborate, not merely consult; to reach out, not merely respond on matters which directly affect the public, and ensure that all voices can be heard equally through fair systems of participation. This means engaging with people who are not always well-educated, attuned to their rights as citizens and voters, and do not have ready access to information and broad

exposure to the voices of opinion-leaders, experts and advocates through standardized rules, protocols, and enabling legislation and regulation (Bridgman and Davis 2000).

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that, 'Every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government either directly or through freely elected representatives in accordance with the provisions of the law', hence, the need to introduce formal structures in governance, a noble measure in achieving the principles of good governance. Furthermore, Creighton (2005) highlights a significant need of public participation in a policy formulation process in that it establishes a new direct link between the public and the decision-makers. This direct link establishes a way of ensuring that decisions that affect people's lives are discussed with the people concerned before a decision is made. Public participation is therefore a way of ensuring genuine interaction among people with different points of view and reassuring the public that all viewpoints are being considered (Creighton, 2005).

Public participation as an addition to representative processes may provide an antidote to national political elites or technocrats. It can counter the over weighted influence of powerful lobbies. It may also offer an effective way to overcome a citizen's sense of futility and powerlessness in the face of these larger forces. In Kenya, several counties have articulated their commitments to citizen engagement in the form of specific, public declarations to that effect. For instance, Makeni County has developed an Act of Assembly on the same. Such publications invariably set out the reasons and justifications for the government's active pursuit of citizen engagement, and outline the benefits to participants.

The concept of Policy- Formulation in Public Participation

Policy-formulation is an activity that precedes the announcement and publication of an objective (Hanekom, S.X. 1986). It indicates a series of decisions that precedes the formulation of policy and decisions on how to carry it out. Moreover, policy-making is also seen as a process that involves several participants such as public officials, political parties, legislatures, interest group and individual citizens. According to Fred (2003), policy-making is a process of continued action by which governments determine what action should be taken and which goals should be achieved for the benefit of the community. Meyer (1996) describes policy-making as the executive and legislative process by which goals, objectives, principles or intentions that commit public officials at governments to a course of action are developed. It is to be noted that the end product of the policy-making process is public policy. Dye (1995) has a much more simplified approach and defines public policy as "what governments have decided to do or not to do".

Analysis of these definitions shows that policy-making process in public participation involves an inherent oriented activity aimed at achieving an objective. It is seen as a process that precedes the publication of community objectives by the government by which attempts are made to enhance and promote the well-being of the citizens at the grass root levels. When citizens are involved in policy making, they feel that they made the policies themselves and they develop a sense of ownership and responsibility over the same. People must be able to have their say – to vote, to engage in political debate and to let those in power know their views on issues which concern them. This is what democracy is about (Richardson 1983). For accomplishing the objective of this proposal, policy-making in public participation involves a pattern of actions generated by the public at local government level over a period of time and during which time a variety of policy decisions are taken on community matters. Moreover, a public participation process plays a fundamental role in making policy acceptable to the public to whom it will become applicable. It is therefore the case that public participation is generally regarded as a good deed, apart from it being a constitutional obligation, and that it adds to the legitimacy of the ultimate policy. Similarly Pierre and Peters (2011) argue that the government should have capability of collecting information on preferences of electorate, in the absence of which it would be difficult to formulate policies efficiently.

The concept of Decentralization in Public Participation

One of the most important benefits of local government is that it is closer to the community than the central government and is therefore in a better position to be able to recognize the needs of the community. That is why the concept of decentralization is often used in close connotation with local governments, it is the antonym or opposite of centralization or concentration; a system whereby local government is established at a distance from the central government. The promotion of public participation through decentralization has been at the center stage since the advent of multiparty democracy in most developing countries including Kenya. Within the context of a state, decentralization is referred to as the process designed to disperse power from the central government to local government. In the Kenyan context, this was

actualized through devolution, where resources and political power was decentralized and shared among counties. Devolved governments are closer to the community and therefore assumed to be in a better position to identify the specific needs of the community. They have implications where traditional ideas of representative government with communities moving away from vicarious engagement in democracy towards more direct involvement in the decision-making processes. Political decentralization or devolution lead to the establishment of a system of local government through which the community has the opportunity to participate in the making and implementation of policies, (Dror, 1975).

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 completely changed the way public participation is done in Kenya. It introduced a new legal framework and institutions to ensure transparency, accountability and public participation in formulation of public policies and enhanced participatory governance through devolved structures at county levels. The new dispensation provided a way to involve ordinary Kenyans in the policy making process as opposed to the previous dispensation, where the process was the work of a select few, the elites. World Bank, (2012) acknowledges that public participation will only be meaningful if choices made are translated into policies hence the need to strengthen public policy. This paradigm shift was precipitated by the shortfalls that are often characteristic of highly centralized systems. The shortfalls include administrative bureaucracies and inefficiencies, misappropriation of public resources and the marginalization of local communities in development processes (LRFT, 2009). However, devolution systems and structures have lacked a coherent or coordinating framework. They have thus been marred by overlaps, duplication, and despite their multiplicity, low citizen involvement (KHRC and Social and SPAN, 2010). Public participation in Kenya's devolved system of government has however, had its fair share of challenges, such as limited support from the political class and low levels of civic education (Kenya School of Government, 2015). However Makeni County has registered a success story and its public participation model has been lauded by the World Bank (2016). In its model, the County has been able to have the citizens identify their development priorities at the grassroots level, with the citizens becoming involved in the prioritization, planning and setting of final expenditures for the identified projects. In addition, the County allows citizens to be engaged in the full implementation of these projects.

Influence of Institutions on Effective Public Participation

Cooper and Bryer, (2007) suggest that, in order to transform the administrative units of government for greater public participation, there is a need for leadership which calls for the orientation of public administrators towards engaging citizens as partners rather than clients and as important stakeholders in the governance process. When members of the public are given the opportunity to participate in local governance, the benefits are immeasurable. Unfortunately, the structure and mechanisms for promoting public participation, especially in the context of developing countries, is underexplored. The shift from government to governance according to Edwards (2005) involves the provision of means to engage individuals and organizations outside government through structures and arrangements which support effective relationships across the public, private and community sectors as they collaborate in decision-making. It involves an active role for government in enabling or capacity building in local communities, rather than the more passive role implied in traditional notions of citizen participation.

The new paradigm of public administration in Kenya has been occasioned by devolution as and involves a shift from a command and control mindset—at both the political and managerial level—to one of collaboration characterized by complex networks of civil societies, both national and county governments' structures, private sector and the general citizenry. While the National Government has institutional and administrative structures running up to village levels, most county governments are yet to achieve this due various reasons such as scarcity of resources. Consequently, genuine engagement with citizens in policymaking calls for distinctive attributes and skills on the part of public servants in charge of administrative unit as meaningful participation, regarded by many as the optimal form of citizen engagement is both an art and a science since the burden of responsibility for initiating, facilitating and sustaining citizen engagement falls heavily on public servants.

Influence of Politics on Effective Public Participation

One of the challenges affecting the success of decentralization is an almost nonexistent demarcation between the patron role of politicians from governance and executive management. Even though citizen engagement in policymaking has gained prominence and is solidly anchored in the law in most countries, many politicians will be willing to risk real

engagement for their own selfish reasons, even though public servants will be willing to enable it through well-intentioned or thoughtfully designed opportunities according to Speer (2012). Berry *et al.*, (1993) contend that political culture influences public participation. They find that a strong motivation to achieve successful participation and ensuring that the participation process is devoid of partisan politics bring about a high level of public engagement. Their findings are reinforced by Fagotto and Fung (2009) who note that public participation is successful when those who hold participatory meetings have political authority and use the input to address citizens' needs through good performance. In order to have successful public engagement, elected officials, especially local legislators at national, county, constituency and ward levels should be responsive to public needs.

McComas (2001) asserts that some government executives see public meetings as a way of ensuring that citizens actively participate in the democratic process, but only if the citizens are informed – for if they are not, they will do more harm than good. These findings are confirmed by Hagelskamp *et al.* (2013), who suggest that elected officials see the public as being uninformed, disengaged and distrustful, and thus see no need to engage them. Oduor *et al.*, (2015) reviewed the status of public participation and the available participation and information frameworks in Kenya's Counties through a qualitative study of Kisumu, Turkana, Makueni and Isiolo Counties. Using key informant interviews and secondary sources like the Kenyan Constitution to review the legal framework, the study found that Kisumu County had decentralized structures for public participation down to the grassroots level. Public meetings were held quarterly and were organized by members of the County Assembly (MCAs) and the Governor. According to the study however, when the MCAs took part in the organization of meetings, participants with differing views were excluded, indicating that the MCAs were not responsive to citizens' needs.

Socio-economic factors influencing Effective Public Participation

These are demographic factors that influence public participation in policy formulation and they include income levels, educational levels, age and sex of the individuals who participate in policy formulation process. These factors are as discussed below;

Gender and Public Participation

Concepts of participation and gender have been a part of emancipatory discourse and practices for the last decade. Advocates of these concepts have claimed that they allow the representation of the most marginalized groups, women and the poor (Akerkar, 2001). The study of historical, philosophical, political texts show that women have been kept outside the public domain of politics as most of the political thinkers and philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel considered women fit only for domestic roles in the private sphere and maintained that there was no place for women in politics because of their suitability in caring roles as mothers and wives (Bari, 2005). The low patronage of women in politics and public decision-making is a global phenomenon.

Throughout history, men have monopolized and dominated strategic decision making positions. Despite the achievement of universal suffrage, increased education and incomes for women, and efforts to increase participation of women in public life, women everywhere remain marginalized and under-represented in those areas of public life where important decisions and policies are made (ADRRI). Doorpersad (2014) concludes that in order to emancipate women and ensure that they fully participate in democratization processes, it is vital to review and revise existing constitutional, political, legislative and regulatory frameworks, including electoral systems, to remove provisions that hinder women's equal participation in the decision-making processes. Studies undertaken in Africa by Ihmeje (2013) and Omodia *et al.*, (2013) argue that women participation in governance in Africa face a myriad challenges including religious and cultural beliefs, lack of economic empowerment, lack of effective means of implementing affirmative action, men dominance of political power, relatively low education levels of women, multiple roles of women in the family setup, women attitude to the process of governance and lack of confidence on the part of women. Ihmeje (2013) further argues that marginalization of women in local governance is nothing but an elongation of male dominance in virtually all political affairs. According to Mukhopadhyay (2005), democratic decentralization is critical for women not only because of the proximity of local government to their lives but because- they are often excluded from government decision-making at the national level. Contrary to views that local government is the level that women can easily break into and thus serve as a springboard to national politics, the hierarchical and embedded nature of local government in local social structures make it difficult for women to break in as independent political actors. While supporting this position, Goetz (2002) argues that where women

are given the opportunity to participate in local government, the terms of their inclusion determine the sustainability of their representation.

Age and Public Participation

This section classifies age into two categories namely Youth and Non-Youth. Youth can play a very important role in any development programs. They are indeed invaluable resources to any nation, because of their fresh motivation, capabilities, and innovativeness which can act as a catalyst for achieving excellence goals. Opportunities to the youth to engage in governance and participate in political decision making processes depend largely on the political, socio economic and cultural contexts where social norms in many parts of the world result in multiple forms of discrimination against the youth (Oduor, *et al.*, 2015). There is strong evidence that participation of young people in formal, institutional political processes is relatively low when compared to older citizen across the globe. This challenges the representativeness of the political system and leads to disenfranchisement of young people (UNDP, 2012; Ihemeje, 2013).

In a UN IAN YD (2012) survey in 186 countries, it was highlighted that the main challenge for youth were limited opportunities for effective participation in decision making processes. With limited opportunities and exposure to meaningfully participate in inclusive decision making processes, young men and women feel excluded and marginalized in their societies and communities. The need for participatory structures and greater trust between youth and institutions were also stressed.

Education and Public Participation

According Edwards (2005), demands for increased public participation in the affairs of government is generally influenced by a better educated, more articulate and more demanding citizenry, many of whom are the ones who express a declining level of trust in their politicians and the political institutions. This belief is usually expressed in demands for more engagement of citizens with meaningful exchanges with government beyond the traditional democratic processes of three or four year elections cycles. According to John, (2009), education level of the citizenry has a significant correlation to the level of public participation. Education often enhances citizens' awareness of governance programs and how to engage the governance system (Ahmad *et al.*, 2005).

Bratton *et al.* conducted a research in six Sub-Saharan countries to determine whether education levels have a correlation with the level of public participation in decentralized units. In their findings, the more a community and its citizenry became educated, the more they engaged in public participation duties like policy formulation. They argue that levels of education elevate citizens' ability to participate in public functions that require a level of technical skills and ability. They contend that the reason the public doesn't have the desire to participate in forums like policy formulation participation is that they feel inadequately informed or educated to be of value. Higher levels of education are critical in entrenching democratic principles of public involvement in the governed (KHRC, 2010). Higher public involvement triggers quest for efficiency and effectiveness in formulation of policies. KHRC (2010) report on public participation highlights the reality of education in civic process that informs public participation. The report findings argue that citizens without education, lack ability to assimilate information, therefore, can rarely formulate interests in civic duties like budget formulation. Mboga, (2009) argues that education expands the ability of the public to appropriate desires, interests, and has their voice heard in logical concise and organized process like policy formulation.

Income Levels and Public Participation

Barrels (2003) argue that the wealthy segments of society and those who are more highly educated take a greater role in public participation. This is because they have greater stakes in the affairs of government because they understand and appreciate political and social life better. The authors argue that the higher income segments are more likely to be interested and engaged in political and civic engagement activity. Bartels (2003) further note that the higher segments of society are usually interested in whom to contact, and how to make their voices heard.

Weber (2000) agrees with this notion and further argues that citizen participation committees and forums are usually crowded with members of the highest socio-economic group. The lack of low-income participants is illustrated in a developing world context by scholars such as Russell and Vidler (2000), who have argued that such citizen participants are difficult to engage in civic activities because their main priorities are to fend for and to provide basic commodities such as food for their families, and not spend time in meetings. Abel and Stephan (2000) while agreeing with this

argument, further caution that although many scholars promote public participation as means of incorporating community values into decision making process that might otherwise be dominated by a small elite, it appears that, a non-elected small elite can dominate a participatory process.

Influence of the Citizen Awareness Levels on Effective Public Participation

Joshi and Houtzager (2012) argue that to enhance public participation in policy formulation, each devolved unit should consider empowering the citizenry through adequate education, and not just civic education or public forums that are reactionary. Various other researchers like Oyugi and Kibua (2008), Joshi and Houtzager (2012) and Mwenda (2010) argue that there exists a significant positive correlation between levels of education and public participation. Effective democracy, is supposed to allow free flow of information to the citizens, which in turn empowers them to participate more fully in public life. Effective governance entails the presence of transparency. In the Kenyan constitution (Article 196) (1) (a) (b), County Assemblies are directed to conduct their governance matters while allowing scrutiny and participation of citizens. Facilitation of public participation includes building capacity in governance literacy, thus citizens be able to forward views and suggestions in the process. This fosters the feeling of ownership and further promotes acceptance of policies in the community. Access to information is an integral component of awareness creation. The right to access information held by governmental authorities often referred to as Freedom of Information is a fundamental human right recognized in International Law. Most recently, Kenya has taken crucial steps towards recognition of the right in the New Constitution. Article 35(1) states that every citizen has the right to access information held by the State. Further, article 35(3) states that the State shall publish and publicize any important information affecting the nation. Access to information is crucial as a right in its own regard and is also central to the functioning of democracy and enforcement of other rights. Without freedom of information, state authorities or agents can selectively release good news whilst withholding damaging information. Such climate then breed corruption and human rights violations can remain unchanged. As the ICJ (2005) points out, any information held by a public body should in principle be openly accessible. This is particularly in recognition of the fact that public bodies hold information not for themselves but for the public good.

The ready availability and accessibility of relevant information from diverse sources is a bedrock condition for effective citizens' participation. To engage effectively, citizens not only need an awareness of their roles and responsibilities but knowledge and skills on how to execute the responsibilities. Capacity building consists of developing knowledge, skills and operational capacity so that individuals and groups may achieve their purposes (Okello *et al.*, 2008). Civic education in Kenya serves to provide and equip the citizens with knowledge on their rights and expectations of the constitutions on their part; enlighten them on the importance of their participation in governance including policy formulation and understand the benefits of their involvement in decision making to the community. Continuous education and awareness creation therefore is required so as to reach all citizens and enlighten them on their roles in governance and policy formulation.

The Task Force on Devolved Governance (TFDG) placed a lot of importance on the role to be played by continuous civic education and awareness. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Kenya have been effective in the awareness creation having adopted a multi-sectoral and thematic strategy as devolved governments have not fully embraced the aspect of creating awareness among their citizens on issues that affect them, thereby leaving a vacuum. In the Kenyan situation, the outcome of awareness creation especially on policy drafts may be seen as creating ownership in the formulation process in the citizens which in the long run foster social acceptance. Summarily civic education should lead to an informed citizenry who will effectively participates in governance at all levels and own the whole process of implementation. Mass media such as radio and television broadcasting and newspapers and magazines play a vital role in disseminating information on public policy, Patton (1989). Members of the public can learn of, participate through such forums and provide their opinions and views thereon on policy issues (Fred, 2009). Therefore, radio and television are additional mechanism for public participation in the public matters while newspapers and magazines provide written information on policy issues which are vital a source for discussion in a democratic local government. Additionally, use of the internet as a means of making available large amount of regularly up-dated reference materials has been seen by many as the way forward in information provisions on public policy (Fred, 2003).

Critique of the Existing Literature

Watson (2001) defines civic education in a democracy as education in self-government. Democratic self-government means that citizens are actively involved in their own governance; they do not just passively accept the dictums of others or acquiesce to the demands of others. As Aristotle put it in his *Politics* (340 BC), "If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost." In other words, the ideals of democracy are most completely realized when every member of the political community shares in its governance. Members of the political community are its citizens; hence citizenship in a democracy is membership in the body politic. Membership implies participation, but not participation for participation's sake. Citizen participation in a democratic society must be based on informed, critical reflection, and on the understanding and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities that go with that membership.

According to a research by Finkel (2000), civic education programs provide explicit instruction to ordinary citizens about democratic institutions, values, and procedures. The findings of the research found that civic education programs do contribute to the development of a democratic political culture amongst participants. These programs have been found to significantly increase individuals' political information, feelings of empowerment, and levels of political participation. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, people who participated in education sessions were significantly more democratically aware over time than those in villages where sessions did not take place. In Kenya, individuals who attended civic education workshops were more likely to report increased awareness of the contents of the constitution and of various proposals being discussed to reform the constitution, as compared to people who did not attend workshops. Masango (2002) favours capacity building to improve the public's understanding of governance processes and to ensure that they participate effectively in governance processes.

According to Cuthill and Fien (2005), capacity building for communities involves "working with communities". This, to them, involves "support, and enhances the existing ability, energy and knowledge of citizens." Arnstein (1969) argues that the ability of citizens to influence decisions depends on the "quality of technical assistance they have in articulating their priorities; and the extent to which the community has been organized to press those priorities." Cuthill and Fien (2005) place the responsibility for capacitating citizens with local government. Their argument is that the position of local government in relation to citizens makes them the right institution to capacitate citizens to ensure that they participate meaningfully in local government processes (Cuthill and Fien, 2005).

Masango (2002) stresses the importance of public awareness of matters related to local government in promoting public participation in policy-making. Glover (2003) emphasized that information sharing in the policy process is a requirement to ensure "effective and inclusive public participation". She stressed that this is merely one movement amongst other important ones. She reiterates the importance of the nature and ways in which information is provided. She also suggests the use of "appropriate and accessible" methods of providing information. This involves information on the contributions made by the public in the policy process. According to Kugonza and Mukobi (2011) public participation is affected by access to information which enables citizens articulate their voice, effectively monitor, hold government accountable and enter into informed dialogue about decisions which affect their lives. According to them information empowers all citizens including vulnerable and excluded people to claim their broader rights and entitlements. They found out that informed citizens can stand up for their rights and hold public officials accountable for their actions and decisions. According to the findings, majority of the respondents disagreed with the view that all the information on government projects is available and accessible to the community members. The study established that information was not provided in a timely manner. Dissemination of information was not effectively and timely done by both the general public and the government. They concluded that there is a positive relationship between information accessibility and participation in lower local government projects. Kakonge (1996) pointed out that public participation is affected by lack of communication between the government and the people. He said that projects are formulated without the dissemination of by the government of information among local people.

Research Gap

Based on the reviewed literature a lot has been studied on public participation in budget formulation and development projects but nothing had been done on the effective public participation in policy formulation and especially in Trans Nzoia County. This study therefore filled the gap by availing information through assessing the determinants of effective public participation in policy formulation in Trans Nzoia County and by extension to other Counties.

Summary

The reviewed literature examines the determinants that influence public participation in the policy formulation process in Kenya and elsewhere. The study focused on institutional factors, political factors, socio economic factors and citizen awareness levels and the extent to which these factors influence public participation in the policy formulation process. The examined literature showed that there are mixed extents of application of the factors that influence public participation and some of these factors either enhance, or hinder public participation in policy formulation. The next chapter presents the methodology that was used in this study.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**Introduction**

This chapter provided the methodology to be adopted in carrying out the study. It details data collection, analysis and interpretation. The chapter also explained the research design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques to be adopted, data collection & presentation and data analysis.

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was applied in the study. Baariu (2015) opines that descriptive survey design is designated to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens, justify current practice and make judgment and also develop theories in the research process. According to Mugenda (2003) descriptive survey design allows description of the behavior of a subject in its unchanged natural environment. It helps in providing a general overview of the subject under study. Descriptive survey research design was used in the current study to provide a synopsis of policy formulation in relation to community participation.

Research Population

According to Ngechu (2014) a population is a well-defined set of people, services, elements and events, group of things or households that are being investigated. The target population of the research was over 10,000 opinion leaders, 75 administrative leaders (Sub-County Administrators, Ward Administrators, and Chiefs) in Trans Nzoia County.

Sampling Frame

Purposive sampling technique was used to select Sub-County Administrators; stratified random sampling was used to select ward administrators, chiefs and opinion leaders. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) 10% to 30% of accessible population is an adequate representative sample. A sample size of 5 Sub-County Administrators, 5 Ward Administrators, 5 Chiefs and 164 opinion leaders was selected. The researcher interviewed the Sub-County Administrators, Ward Administrators, and Chiefs while the information from opinion leaders was collected using questionnaires.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample is a portion of the entire data from which the findings after analysis can be used to generalize the conclusions about the entire population (Kothari, 2010). By selecting part of the population, the researcher can arrive at conclusions about the entire population based on that sampledrawn. This study used sampling methods, as explained in 3.4 above in arriving at the sample size using the Magnani, (1997) formula:

$$n = \frac{t^2 \times p(1-p)}{m^2}$$

Where;

n required sample size

t confidence level at 95 % (standard value of ± 1.96)

p estimated of public participation.

m margin of error at 5%.

$$N = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.135(1-0.135)}{0.05^2}$$

$$= 179$$

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires and interview guides were employed to obtain data from the respondents. In the questionnaire, both open and closed ended questions were asked to capture information from the opinion leaders on their level of participation in the formulation of policies. Interview gathered information from the administrators.

Data Collection procedure

The study utilized primary sources to collect data. Questionnaires were used to collect data from opinion leaders but administrators were interviewed. This ensured triangulation and objective data analysis. The researcher engaged two research assistants who were trained and informed on the purpose, objectives and other important aspects of the research to assist in the administration of research instruments to the respondents.

Pilot Test

A pilot study on selected 3 administrators (Chief, Ward Administrator and Sub-County Administrator) and 7 opinion leaders selected across Tongaren Sub-County, Bungoma County was carried out. Tongaren Sub-County is one of the sub-counties in the neighboring Bungoma County and was chosen as a pilot area for the research instrument because it has several similarities to Trans Nzoia County which is the scope of the study.

Instrument Validity

Validity of research instruments is intended to determine whether the instrument truly measures that which it is intended to measure. According to Kothari (2010) validity measures the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data represents the truth, credibility, and the right phenomena under the study. To ensure content-valid data, the researcher identified a domain of indicators which were relevant to the variables of the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) a content-valid measure should contain all possible items that should be used in measuring the concept under study. The identified set of indicators was then discussed with the research supervisor and other experts to ensure that the research instrument accurately represented the concept of community participation in policy formulation.

Instrument Reliability

The reliability of an instrument refers to its ability to produce consistent and stable measurements (Gitonga, 2018). Gitonga (2018) goes ahead to explain that reliability can be seen from two sides: reliability (the extent of accuracy) and unreliability (the extent of inaccuracy). The most common reliability coefficient is the Cronbach's alpha, which estimates internal consistency by determining how all items on a test relate to all other items and to the total test - internal coherence of data. The reliability is expressed as a coefficient between 0 and 1. The higher the coefficient, the more reliable is the test.

In this study, to ensure the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was used. Cronbach Alpha value is widely used to verify the reliability of the construct. Therefore, Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the proposed constructs. The findings indicated that Institutional Structures had a coefficient of 0.736; Politics had a coefficient of 0.794, Citizen Awareness had a coefficient of 0.787 and Socio-Economic Factors had a coefficient of 0.783. All constructs depicted that the value of Cronbach's Alpha are above the suggested value of 0.7 thus the study was reliable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Ronoh, 2018). Based on the reliability test, it was concluded that the scale used in this study is reliable to capture the constructs as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Cronbach Alpha Co-efficients

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach alpha	Comment
Institutional Structures	5	0.736	Acceptable
Politics	5	0.794	Acceptable
Citizen Awareness	5	0.787	Acceptable
Socio-Economic Factors	5	0.783	Acceptable
Public Participation	5	0.845	Acceptable

Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected from questionnaires was coded, cleaned and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data obtained was organized according to categories and merged together with quantitative data to facilitate the writing and composition of the key findings. Analysis of the data enabled the researcher to interpret the information and draw conclusions and recommendations of the study. Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) was used to process and analyze the data which was then presented using tables and figures and in a multiple regression model. The analyzed data was then presented in a multiple regression model of the form as indicated in chapter four;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y:	Effective Public Participation in Policy Formulation in Trans Nzoia County
$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$:	Regression Coefficients
X_1 :	Institutional Structures
X_2 :	Politics
X_3 :	Socio-Economic Status
X_4 :	Citizen Awareness
β_0 :	Constant
ϵ	Error Term

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the study results and findings. The data was then analyzed and findings discussed in line with objectives of the study. This included the descriptive and inferential statistics; the response rate, the ANOVA, the multiple regression and finally correlation analysis were also included in this chapter.

Response Rate

Table 4.1 below indicated the response rate from responded interviewed for the purposes of data collection for the study from which conclusions were made:

Table 4.1: Response Rate

	Opinion Leaders	Percent	Administrators	Percent
Filled and returned Questionnaires	162	99	0	0
Not Satisfactorily Filled	1	1	0	0
Not Returned	1	1	0	0
Interviewed	0	0	15	100
TOTAL	164	100	15	100

From a total of 164 questionnaires issued to opinion leaders, 162 were satisfactorily filled and returned, one (1) questionnaire had crucial sections not filled and therefore considered incomplete and hence not fit to be included in the analysis while the other one (1) questionnaire was not returned. Additionally, 15 administrators were interviewed. Being an interview, a response rate of 100% was achieved. This summed up to a response rate of 99% which was considered strong enough to carry on with the analysis of the questionnaire responses. A response rate of 50% is adequate; 60% good and above 70% is considered very good (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). It was then resolved to adopt a significant level of 5% for purposes of data analysis since the study was based on social issues.

Gender of the Respondents

The study sought to gauge the response of the different gender groups by asking them to indicate their gender. Their response was guided by the following question: Please tick as appropriate: Gender: Male () Female (). This was important in determining gender disparities in the participation of policy formulation process,

Table 4.2: Respondents' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	125	71
Female	52	29
Intersex	0	0
Total	177	100

Since intersex has been accepted as a third gender in Kenya, the researcher sought to take care of the new gender by including it in the questionnaire. The results in table 4.2 above showed that 71% of the respondents were male, 29% were female while there were no intersex gender respondents. This therefore implied that few women participate in forums that require public participation.

Age Distribution of the Respondents

Table 4.3: Respondents' Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
24-29	26	14
30-35	22	12
36-41	38	22
41-46	51	29
47-51	40	23
Total	177	100

The data was collected on the basis of age distribution as shown in the above table where majority were aged between 41 and 46 years old at 29%, followed by 23% of the respondents whose ages were between 47 and 51 years old, 22% were aged between 36 and 41 years old, those between 24 and 29 years old constituted 14% while the minority age group was of those aged between 30 and 35 years old at 12% of the total number of respondents. Majority of the respondents were aged above forty years which led to the researcher concluding that if indeed this reflected the overall pattern of the personnel, the future of the affected sectors and future public participation in policy formulation was in jeopardy *ceteris paribus*.

Level of education

Data on respondents' level of education/training was sought and tabulated as shown below:

Table 4.4: Respondents level of Education

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Secondary	63	35
Tertiary/college	78	44
University	36	21
Total	177	100

From the table 4.4 on education level above, 44% of the respondents, which constituted the majority, had acquired at tertiary training, translated to mean either a certificate or diploma qualification, 35% had secondary qualification while 21% constituted those with university education; both undergraduate or Postgraduate qualifications. This data made the researcher conclude that the respondents' education/academic qualifications were capable of enabling them respond well to the questions/statements in the questionnaires and hence reliable feedback for research success purposes.

Analysis of Public Participation in Policy Formulation.

The research sought to establish if the respondents had ever participated in policy formulation forums and if they did, what the forum was about. Their responses were as shown in table 4.5 and 4.6 below:

Table 4.5: Level of participation of Public in Forums

Level of participation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	150	93
No	12	7
Total	162	100

The results in table 4.5 above showed that 93% of the opinion leaders had participated in forums that required public participation while 7% had never participated in such forums. On the type of forum the respondents had participated in, the data was as tabulated in Table 4.6 below:

Table 4.6: Type of forum respondent participated in

Forum participated in	Frequency	Percent
Budget making	87	54
CIDP	14	9
Finance Bill	54	33
Policy Formulation Process	7	4
Total	162	100

The results in table 4.6 above showed that 54% of the respondents had participated in the budget making process, 33% had participated in finance bill forums, 9% in CIDP making process and only 4% had participated in policy formulation process. This implied that there is low involvement of the public in forums that require public participation by law. Participation of the public in policy formulation is the lowest implying that a large volume of policies formulated at the county level lack public input. This dismal performance is supported by Transparency International (2016) finding which stated that only 38% are aware of County meetings and only 15% attend those meetings. In addition, Government of Kenya (2016) acknowledged that the quality of public participation is low and has not been optimized due to low civic awareness by the citizenry, uncoordinated civic education and challenges in accessing information. It is evident that most county public participation processes take place as a formality to meet the minimum requirements of the Constitution as documented by the JRMA, (2014), thereby undermining the legitimacy of the process as envisioned in the Constitution.

The respondents were asked to rate the sentences to establish their participation in policy formulation and their rating is shown in table 4.7 below:

Table 4.7: Public Participation in Policy Formulation

Item	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
Opinion leaders understand the concept of public participation in policy formulation	10	28	50	7	5
In the last two years, there has been participation in policy formulation at your Sub-County level	20	15	10	30	25
The constitution provides for mechanisms for public participation in policy formulation.	5	5	20	25	45
Given a chance, I would participate (again) in policy formulation at my constituency.	10	10	20	30	30

The Table 4.7 above, on the dependent variable (Public participation), 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed when asked whether they understood the concept of public participation in policy formulation, 28% disagreed, 50% remained neutral, 7% agreed while only 5% strongly agreed to this statement. When asked about whether they had participated in policy formulation at the constituency level in the past two years, 20% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 15% disagreed, 10% remained neutral, 30% agreed while 25% strongly agreed that they can indeed participate.

As to whether they are aware that the constitution provides for mechanisms for public participation in policy formulation, 5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and agreed respectively, 20% remained neutral. With 25% agreeing and 45% strongly agreeing that the constitution provides for mechanisms for public participation in policy formulation, the overall conclusion was that the largest group understood the constitutional provision. In relation to whether given a chance, they would participate (again) in policy formulation at their respective constituencies, 10% of the respondents were strongly not willing, another 10% were simply not willing to participate, 20% opted to remain undecided, 30% agree that they will participate while another 30% strongly agreed that they will participate when given a chance. These findings implied that the public does not participate in policy formulation yet it's very important for sustainable development.

According to Moseti (2010), participation serves as an instrument for closing the gap between local government, civil society, private sector and the general community by developing a common understanding about a local situation, priorities and programs. While according to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation theory; Meaningful public participation, unlike normal participation whose sole purpose is to meet minimum legal requirements, calls for citizens to have access to information that is relevant to policy-making, an ability to hold their political and administrative leaders to account and an influence on the decision-making process. Andrade and Rhodes (2012) also argued that true forms of public participation must give citizens more direct decision-making control, with a structural system that is fair to enhance their participation.

Institutional Structures on Public Participation in Policy Formulation.

The findings on the effect of Institutional Structures on Public Participation in Policy Formulation were presented in Table 4.8 as shown below;

Table 4.8: Influence of Institutional Structures on Public Participation

Item	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
The national government has well organized structures at the grassroots level that support public participation in policy formulation	5	10	12	38	35
The county government of Trans Nzoia has well organized institutional structures for citizen participation	10	20	40	10	20
Opinion leaders in the county are people recognized and respected	10	20	5	30	35
Citizen opinion is respected and acted upon by both national and county governments	30	30	20	10	10

Table 4.8 above presented the respondents' feedback on the first independent variable (Institutional Structures). On whether the national government has well organized structures at the grassroots level that support public participation in policy formulation, 5% strongly disagreed, 10% of the respondents disagreed, 12% remained undecided, 38% agreed while 35% strongly agreed to this statement. On whether the county government of Trans Nzoia has well organized institutional structures for citizen participation, 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 20% disagreed, 40% were neutral respondents, 10% agreed while 20% of the respondents strongly agreed. This implied that organized institutional structures in the county are either non-existent or no awareness is being promoted. On whether Opinion leaders in the county are people recognized and respected, 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 20% disagreed, 5% of the respondents remained neutral, 30% of them agreed that indeed opinion leaders in the county are people recognized and respected; with 35% strongly agreeing that indeed opinion leaders in the county are people recognized and respected. Faced with the question as to whether the Citizen opinion is respected and acted upon by both national and county governments, 30% strongly disagreed, another 30% disagreed that Citizen opinion is not respected and acted upon by both national and county governments, 20% remained neutral while 10% agreed and another 10% also strongly agreed that Citizen opinion is respected and acted upon by both national and county governments.

During the study, interview schedules were conducted on fifteen (15) administrators comprising of Chiefs, Ward Administrators and Sub-County Administrators across the five sub counties in Trans Nzoia County namely Cherangani, Saboti, Kiminini, Endebes and Kwanza. One of the chiefs responded by underpinning the importance of institutional structures in public participation and policy formulation terming them as important units which facilitate public participation meetings through coordination and communication and that administrators manning these units are tasked with the responsibility of planning, organizing, guiding, executing and presiding over the meetings. He continued to say that weak structures lead to poor participation of citizens while strengthening them leads to provision of opportunities for the public to engage in decision making. In addition, he observed that such structures are not always well funded to facilitate such meetings on time and in most cases officers do not give members of the public ample notice for the meetings.

One of the Ward Administrators responded by saying that administrative structures are important in the sense that the officers in charge are the ones who prepare, set the agenda, invite stakeholders and conduct public participation meetings. They are also the ones who give feedback to relevant offices for implementation. They also issue notices or publicize meetings detailing the agenda; and where and when the public meetings will take place. In response to the interview, a Sub-County Administrator observed that these structures are important since they create awareness, publicity and pass information on intention to formulate policies and circulate drafts among the citizens. He added that national government administrative structures are more efficient and effective in that they have structures up to the village level. This promotes participation of citizens as information reaches all and sundry thereby affording opportunities for majority of citizens including women, the poor and less educated to air their views because the meetings are held at grass root levels.

Another respondent observed that Trans Nzoia County Government on the other hand does not have staff beyond wards hence making it difficult for information to reach citizens at grass root levels. This in turn affects the process of making policies because meetings called by County Government administrators are poorly attended due to poor publicity and awareness creation. Owing to the number of years national government structures have been in existence in the country, its administrators command more respect from the citizens hence they are always well attended and calmer. In addition, the public has more confidence in policies originating from national government than county governments. For this reason, the latter do not enjoy sufficient support, confidence and trust from the citizens hence the reason why their meetings are poorly attended.

These findings were in agreement with the arguments and findings of many scholars. The shift from government to governance according to Edwards (2005) involves the provision of means to engage individuals and organizations outside government through structures and arrangements which support effective relationships across the public, private and community sectors as they collaborate in decision-making. It involves an active role for government in enabling or capacity building in local communities, rather than the more passive role implied in traditional notions of citizen participation. Arnstein (1969) argues that the ability of citizens to influence decisions depends on the "quality of technical assistance they have in articulating their priorities; and the extent to which the community has been organized to press those priorities." Cuthill and Fien (2005) place the responsibility for capacitating citizens with local government. Their argument is that the position of local government in relation to citizens makes them the right institution to capacitate citizens to ensure that they participate meaningfully in local government processes (Cuthill and Fien, 2005). Relationship between variables

The study used the regression equation for purposes of measuring/testing the nature of relationship between the variables. Variable predictions were made from the study, data analyzed and the results presented in the ANOVA table as shown below;

Table 4.9: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	50.991	1	50.991	4.772	.037 ^b
	Residual	331.251	31	10.686		
	Total	382.242	32			

a. Dependent Variable: Public participation in policy formulation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Structures, Politics, Citizen Awareness & Socio-Economic Status

The F-ratio is 4.772 which were significant at $p < .05$ meaning the regression model was fit for this analysis where by the prediction of results was improved from fitting the model.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of all the findings and results of chapter four as collected and analyzed by the researcher basing on research objectives, the conclusion derived from the findings and recommendation of the areas of concern identified by the findings and conclusion.

Summary of the findings

Public Participation in Policy formulation

The study established that majority of the opinion leaders had participated in forums that required public participation mainly the budget making process and to some extent in finance forums. There was insignificant public participation in CIDP making process and in policy formulation process. The study established that not all opinion leaders understood the concept of public participation in policy formulation and that in the last two years and there was no participation in policy formulation at sub-county levels. However, the study established that the respondents were aware of the provision of the constitution on the mechanisms for public participation in policy formulation and the chance given by it to the public. They confirmed that given chance, they would participate in policy formulation.

Conclusion

Basing on the findings, the following conclusions were arrived at: Correlation analysis established that institutional structures positively influenced citizen awareness and participation in the policy formulation process, Politics positively influenced institutional structures, citizen awareness and public participation, citizen awareness positively influenced public participation in policy formulation but the influence was not significant and socio-economic status positively but insignificantly influence public participation in policy formulation. First, the national government had well organized structures at the grassroots level that support public participation while the county government of Trans Nzoia did not have well organized institutional structures for citizen participation. Secondly, politics at the ward level supported public participation but the constituency and county government politics did not engage the grassroots in policy formulation. Thirdly, age, education level, gender and income level influences the respondent's level of participation in policy formulation. Finally, the study revealed that there were no organized channels for citizen involvement to participate in policy formulation, they were not involved in matters concerning policy formulation within good time, there was no enough civic education carried out in the county on participation, citizens were not aware of their rights and responsibilities in governance and that there was no sufficient publicity and adequate notice for citizens to participate in policy formulation. Last but not least, the preferred means of communication was radio/TV, social media and posters/newspapers.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions, the study recommended the following in order to increase participation of the public in policy formulation processes; that the county government should carry out an audit of its administrative unit structures that facilitate public participation in policy formulation so as to strengthen them to genuinely engage citizens in policymaking, That the political class should ensure that the public participation process in policy formulation is devoid of partisan politics so as to bring about a high level of citizen engagement.

Areas for further Research

The researcher, after the analysis, interpretation, presentation, conclusions and recommendations is of the view that this study alone could not exhaust this area of public participation in policy formulation. This study had only covered a single county out the 47 counties in Kenya. It is therefore prudent to suggest that a similar study be carried out in order to find out how public participation is satisfying the requirements in the constitution, or otherwise, in the entire republic. That a study be carried out on the levels of civic education and awareness in Trans Nzoia County to ascertain why the county populace is not participating in public forums, a fact which is its constitutional right and on issues that directly affect their lives

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