

# FACTORS INFLUENCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BUDGET FORMULATION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN KENYA, A CASE OF WAJIR COUNTY

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**Abstract:** The general objective of this project was to evaluate the factors influencing public participation in budget formulation in county government in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to determine the influence of citizen awareness on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya; to establish the influence of information access on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya; to find out the influence of education level on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya and finally to find out the influence of gender on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. The study used descriptive design because it will enhance systematic description that is as accurate, valid and reliable as possible regarding the responses. This research was carried out in seven constituencies of Wajir County. These are Wajir North, Wajir West, Wajir East and South. Since the sample size of 150 represented 30% of the population it was deemed appropriate. The researcher used questionnaires and secondary data as the research instrument to gather the relevant information needed related to the study. The study involved use of professionals and experts to test the validity of questionnaire by trying to assess what concept the instrument is trying to measure and the accuracy of representation of the concept under research. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. In addition the study used multiple regression analysis to analyze the data. This study concluded that citizen awareness influence significantly and positively on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. The study also concluded income has a significant and a positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. The study further concluded that education level had significant and a positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. Finally, the study concluded that gender had a significant and positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. The study recommends that The County Government should intensify civic education on the budget formulation especially among the poorer section of the community.

**Keywords:** Citizen awareness, Information access, education level and budget formulation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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 service to decentralized and Citizen participating in policy formulation and service delivery. 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). According to Azfar, (1999) decentralization involves the central government transferring to lower-level governments, both financial and administrative and political powers. The adoption of decentralization is appearing to be the trend in public administration in the world, judging by the sizeable number and the ever increasing number of countries applying it in governance in the last three decades.

**Statement of the problem:**

Five years after the establishment of the county governments, service delivery in most of the counties has not improved significantly (TI, 2014); county governments are characterized by high levels of corruption and embezzlement of public funds (EACC, 2015) while citizen participation in budget formulation remains low and limited to merely giving opinions during public forums rather than actively participating in decision making as envisaged in the Constitution (IEA, 2015). This is contrary to what was expected of the devolved governments. From baseline survey findings of a report on the status of governance in Kenya, 24.7% of the public are aware of how devolution operates, and about 29% understood the county structures in the devolved governments. A paltry 1% of the population mentioned having engaged in developing policies on budget formulation. It's evident from this survey that voting is the only participation process widely practiced by majority of the citizens in total disregard of all others. (Society for International Development, 2017). This is an indication that in as much as the budget formulation is being implemented in Kenya, public participation is still negligible.

**Objectives:**

- i. To determine the influence of citizen awareness on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya.
- ii. To establish how information access influence budget formulation in county government in Kenya.
- iii. To find out the influence of education level on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya.
- iv. To find out how gender influence the budget formulation in county government in Kenya.

**2. THEORETICAL REVIEW****Agency theory:**

The Agency theory also supports development of budgeting. The classic agency theory concept was developed by Berle and Means in 1932. The theory explains why conflicts exist between principals (shareholders/owners) and their agents (managers) leading to agency costs. It aims at reducing information asymmetry so that both the principal and agent read from the same script through the threat of sanctions and the possibility of incentives. Agency theory is developed around the concept of contractual relationships between two groups with conflicting objectives, i.e. principles and agents. The objective in agency theory is to structure the contractual relationship between these groups so that agents take actions to maximize the welfare of principals. This is based on standard principal-agent models involving supervision (Kofman & Lawaree, 1993 & 1996; Khalil & lawaree, 2006).

**Public Choice Theory:**

The Public Choice Theory (PCT) came into being with the backdrop in the economics environment. Its main attention is on how people make choices in their bid to choose on public services. It equates public service delivery to a market-like competition. The public is seen as the buyer who wishes to purchase the best product in the market which is the best public service. (Lamothe and Lamothe 2009). In a market situation, any monopolistic possession of production power or of goods and services eventually results to slackened and inefficiency in service delivery management (Ostrom, 1971; Savas 2002).

**Participatory Democracy theory:**

In her book Participation and Democratic theory, Pateman (1970) argues that participatory democratic theory is built around the central assertion that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another. That the existence of representative institution at the national level is not sufficient for democracy. Pateman argues that for there to be maximum participation at the national level, the socialization or social training must take place at other spheres so that the necessary individual attitudes and psychological qualities can be developed. The development of the individual takes place through the process of participation itself

**Public Value Theory (PVT):**

Public value theory assumes that services are provided in line with the public interest (Bozeman 2002). Public interest can be explained as the choice knowledgeable citizens will make for the best interest of the society. This theory may be used to

explain the benefits which the citizens will reap by being enlightened to participate in governance and allowed to make the best choices for the benefit of the whole community.. This theory can be applied to make public institutions to respect the position public players and offer the best services to them (Bozeman 2002, Lippman 1955).

#### Conceptual framework:

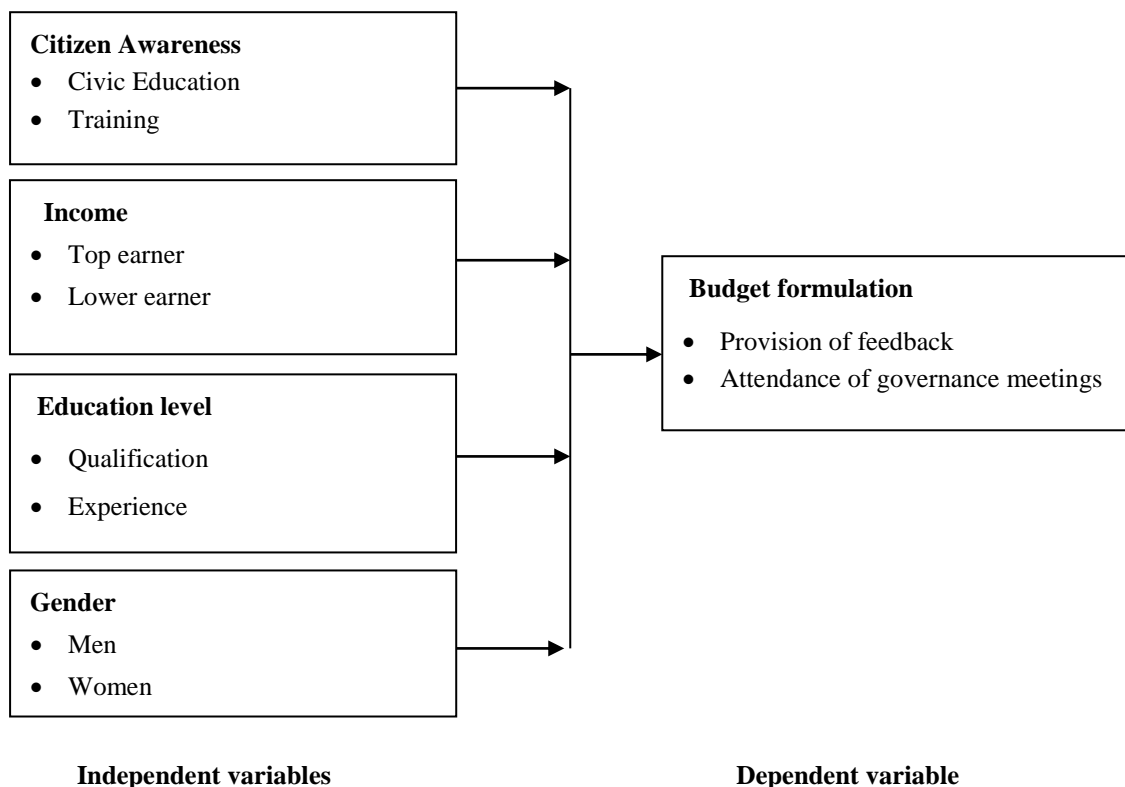


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

#### Research gaps:

A number of studies have been conducted on the public participation. Wacuka, (2016) conducted a study on the factors affecting public participation in effective devolved governance in Kenya. Opaat, (2016) conducted a study on the factors influencing public participation in project development in Busia county Kenya. Kalekye, (2016) conducted a study on the determinants of citizen participation in devolved governance in Kenya. Kaseya, (2016) conducted a study on the factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Public Participation in County Governance in Kenya. Rotich, (2015) conducted a study on the factors affecting budget utilization kericho county government in Kenya. Looking at the studies above it is evident that, despite previous studies focusing on public participation, none has focused on the public participation on the context of budget formulation in Wajir County.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was descriptive research design. The target population was 450 residents of Wajir who previously participated in the process of budget formulation in 2017. The researcher used stratified random sampling to select the respondents. The study employ eda sample of 150 which represented 30% of population.. The use of 150 respondents in the study was justified as it was in line with the recommendations of Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) who indicated that a descriptive study should include at least 10-30% of the total population. The study used structured questionnaires in order to collect data.. The researcher edited the completed questionnaires for completeness and consistency and data clean-up will followed. The data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistical tool (SPSS) was used by the researcher to describe the data.

**Model:**

Analysis of data used multiple regressions to test the research questions

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

Where,

Y= Budget formulation

X1: Citizen Awareness

X2: Information access

X3: Education level

X4: Gender

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$\beta_i$  = Regression coefficients for the respective independent variables

$\varepsilon$  = Error term

#### 4. REGRESSION RESULTS

##### Coefficients of Regression Model:

Table 4.1 Significance of Independent Variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.017	.030		.000	1.000
1 Awareness	.898	.048	.799	17.230	.000
Income	.645	.060	.195	2.757	.007
Education	.489	.063	.000	.000	1.000
Gender	.364	.043	.000	.000	1.000

The results in Table 4.16 indicate that citizen awareness significantly and positively influenced on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. From the findings of the study it is evident that citizen awareness plays a major role on the effectiveness of budget formulation in the County Government. When the residents are enlightened on their rights of participation in the affairs of the County Government, they tend to participate more and demand for their rights. This lead to effective public participation in county government budget formulation that are reflected through projects that are based on the felt needs of the county government.

Further, income has a significant and a positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. This implies that richer people tend to have more stakes in the political process because they understand political and social life better. Wealthier members of the public tend to participate more effectively in budget formulation because lower income segments especially in the developing world are more concerned about other priorities such as fending for their families.

Education level had significant and a positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. This implies that education is linked to the publics' ability to express their interest in self-determining governance of the people by the people and lack of sufficient educational attainment hampers information dissemination hence lower the quality of public participation in budget formulation. Education expands the ability of citizens to appropriate their desires and interests and have their voices heard in a logical and organized manner.

Gender had a significant and positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. It is argued that where women are given the opportunity to participate in local government in budget formulation, the terms of their inclusion determine the sustainability of their representation. However, marginalization of women in local governance is

nothing but an elongation of male dominance in virtually all political affairs. As such, historical fact of this nature is strongly associated with the attitudinal views which had often impede the chances of women to having more political representatives at the various local government

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that citizen awareness significantly and positively influenced the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. The study further concluded that income has a significant and a positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. The study also concluded that education level had significant and a positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya. Finally, The study concluded that Gender had a significant and positive influence on the budget formulation in county government in Kenya.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that The County Government should intensify civic education on the budget formulation especially among the poorer section of the community. This will ensure that their priorities are addressed by the County Government.

The study also recommends that since the income level of respondents influences their level of participation in budget formulation, the Wajir County should consider improving the living standard of its residents.

The study further recommends that the county government should consider including people with certificate level of education and above for purposes of enriching the debates on budget formulation.

### Suggestions for Further Research:

This study mainly focused on factors influencing public participation in budget formulation in county government in Kenya in context of Wajir County. However there is need for further research to be conducted on the factors affecting budget formulation in other counties in Kenya so as to determine whether the other factors affecting budget formulation not tackled in this study. Therefore, further research should be undertaken in the other counties to investigate the other factors that affect budget formulation.

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