

Influence of Public Participation Administrative Structures and Procedures on Governance: A Case of UasinGishu County, Kenya

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Abstract: Public participation has been reported to be an indispensable component during policy making and its implementation for supporting democracy and stimulating good governance. Public participation is a new concept that came with devolution of governance in Kenya. It is therefore an exciting and valuable subject of study in Public Administration especially when it pertains to the concept of participatory democracy and representation. The main objective of this study was to determine the effectiveness in participation of public in promoting good governance in UasinGishu County. The research methodology to be used is qualitative. The research design took the form of a case study. The method of data collection is a combination of document analysis, interviews and questionnaires. A total of 37 respondents were considered in the study. The respondents were mainly county administrator (1), sub-county administrators (6) and ward administrators (30). Purposive sampling and maximum variation sampling techniques were adopted for the study. The data obtained from recorded interviews were transcribed, grouped and analyzed into thematic areas. The findings from the study indicates that 24 out of 37 administrators representing 64.86 % noted the presents of requisite laws that promote public participation, 28 out of 37 administrators representing 75.68% believes that there is a policy in place to guide public participation, 23 out of 37 representing 62.16% believes that there are robust procedures for dissemination of information on public participation, 18 out of 37 administrators representing 48.65% agrees that procedures for civic education have been established while 15 out of 37 administrators representing 40.54% believes there are procedures in place for involving other stakeholders in public participation. The study concluded that UasinGishu County has made great strides as far as setting up of structures and processes required for public participation required by the county government act of 2012

Keywords; Public Participation, Governance, organizational structures

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of public participation in the field on Policy-making and its execution is gaining popularity globally among government institutions as catalyst for enhancing democracy. There are numerous theories of participation which together elicit divergent scholarly views and definitions of the same concept. Participation can be seen as a means to an end and is not an end in itself. With regard to public administration, participation can be seen as an activity take on by local government organizations to apprehend specific objectives (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). In other words, it is a deliberate goal-oriented activity undertaken by a government institution.

Public participation is a new concept that came with devolution of governance in Kenya. It is therefore an exciting and valuable subject of study in Public Administration especially when it pertains to the concept of participatory democracy and representation. Gaventa (2004) explained that stimulating democracy at grassroots level enables the locals to get the chance to take part in the making and implementation of decisions that affect them.

In China, participation may take one or more days of meetings and deliberation, and financial grants may be used as incentive (He, 2011). A study by Collins and Chan (2009) showed that public participation China curbed corruption, improve administrative efficiency and improve state capacity. In the Philippines, it is even more radical as the advocates for public participation are human rights activists. For African countries, The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation was adopted in February 1990 at the "International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa", Arusha, Tanzania. The Charter was initiated by NGOs, grass-roots organizations and African Governments.

In Kenya, public participation concept has been given prominence in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (Akech, 2010). Jochnick (1999) explained that participation should first instill all public affairs and then be endorsed by both Non-State Actors and the State acting in public interest. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 sets key necessities for the administration at both levels of government to offer frameworks for public participation

in governance progressions. Cornwall (2002) recorded that prominence for citizen participation highlights the fact that the election of legislatures does not negate the essential for people to continuously be involved in governance progressions.

Public participation has been reported to be an indispensable component during policy making and its implementation for supporting democracy and stimulating good governance. Public participation is a new concept that came with devolution of governance in Kenya. It is therefore an exciting and valuable subject of study in Public Administration especially when it pertains to the concept of participatory democracy and representation. The main aim of this study was to determine the influence of public participation administrative structures and procedures on governance in UasinGishu County.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded on Deliberative democracy theory originally devised by Joseph Bessette in his 1980 work titled *Deliberative Democracy and Procedural justice* theory established in the early 1970s by two researchers namely; John Thibaut and Laurens Walker. Deliberative democracy is a concept that was developed in the 1980s and it continually extended courtesy of movements concerned with citizen participation that happened in the past. As explained by Resnik (2010), it gained drive as a handy tool in addressing contentious issues among political agents. Deliberative democracy further describes an overriding process that differed from conventional democratic processes. It focused on the act of considering decision made by the government, in cooperating elites directly in the process of making decision and also integrating the mutual judgment of the citizens (Nabatchi, 2010). This approach emphasizes the impression that decisions have to be made through healthy consultations, other than the process where the majority vote. In addition, this approach permits a more reflective decision-making of the greater society that such decisions will influence. The approach also is said to propagate passive members of the public to take place in discussions concerning policy, since every participant's voice bears the same weight through this approach. A good number of philosophers have elaborated that the best decisions concerning policy are made democracy works with and in favor of the public (Ozanne et al., 2009). This is attained by notifying the public about the political atmosphere surrounding them and likewise updating them of their key responsibilities as citizens and the powers that they can enact.

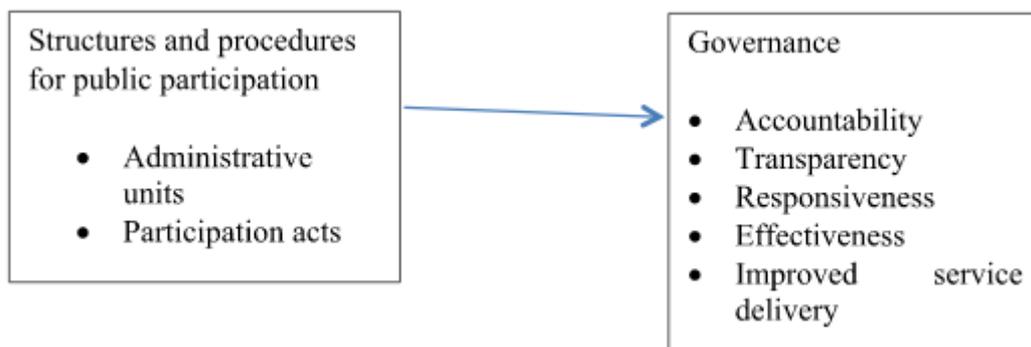


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The methodology used in this study is a qualitative study utilizing interviews, questionnaires and document analysis to gain information regarding the nature of public participation as a means of enhancing governance.

Research Design

A survey design was employed in the study as it allowed the researcher to describe public participation including benefits and challenges associated in detail.

Study area

The study was conducted in UasinGishu County which is one of the 47 counties of Kenya. It is located in the former Rift Valley Province. Eldoret town is the administrative and commercial Centre of the county. Table 1 below is a summary of Administrative divisions in UasinGishu with their estimated populations and headquarters

Table 1: Administrative Divisions in UasinGishu County

Sub Counties	Population	Urban Pop	Headquarters
Ainabkoi	77,290	18,799	<u>Ainabkoi</u>
Kapseret	93,162	55,056	Kapseret
Kesses	84,894	0	Kesses
Moiben	92,717	6,172	Moiben
Soy	165,127	46,338	<u>Eldoret</u>
Turbo	109,508	46,900	<u>Turbo</u>

Source: (KBS Census, 2009)

The county has six sub counties namely Ainabkoi, Kapseret, Kesses Constituency, Moiben ,Soi and Turbo.

Target Population

The target population of the study was county administrative staff. There are a total of Six (6) sub county administrators and thirty (30) ward administrators in UasinGishu County. The sub county administrators are in charge of administrative duties at the sub county level while ward administrators are in charge of the wards. Both of them play a critical role in organizing and facilitating public participation within their jurisdiction.

Sampling Procedures and Techniques

Sampling of County Administrative Staff

Purposive sampling technique was employed in the present research study for sampling of administrative staff. The assumption behind purposive sampling is that the researcher can utilize good judgment wisely and appropriately in selecting the occurrences to be involved and develop samples that are acceptable. Bovens (2005) further argued that the researcher has the freedom to exercise his/her ability to select subjects who represent the population under study. In addition, Polkinghorne (2005) asserted that in purposive sampling, participants are selected since they have the essential features and are available to the researcher.

Sample Size

At the sub county administrative units, six out of six sub county administrators representing 100% of total sub-county administrators were sampled for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used for this group of administrators. The criteria used to select ward administrators for interviews was maximum variation sampling in which two out of the six sub-counties with the most and the least population were selected. In total, ten (13) Ward administrators were selected for interviewing while the rest of the wards seventeen (17) were given questionnaires. In total, thirty Ward administrators were selected to take part in the study representing 100% or all ward administrators.

Research Instruments

Questionnaire

The survey questionnaires were distributed to respondents in their areas of jurisdiction within the geographic borders of the study area. Each respondent was expected to read and understand the contents of the questionnaires before determining whether to take part in the survey or not. The questionnaire was grouped into two distinct sections mainly A and B. The responses that were obtained from the participants were analyzed accordingly.

Interview Guide Schedule

The present study used interviews as the main strategy for data collection from the sub county administrators and other respondents in a bid to achieve its objects. An interview schedule was developed to guide the interview process. Carrying out of interviews on participation of public in the coming up and execution of policy among other things augmented a high construct validity and establish a rapport with research subjects which may in turn promote ownership of outcomes as suggested by (Mouton, 2002). However, interviews are limited the fact that measurements are not standardized and also data collection and analysis are cumbersome (Mouton, 2002). Nevertheless, the method was used to collect data since it allows personal contact with participants. In addition, conducting several interviews enhances analysis and assessment of the gathered information for its validity and reliability.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The researcher validated the data collection instruments (Questionnaires and interview guide schedule) by subjecting it to a rigorous scrutiny by two senior research experts. The experts were guided by validations guide attached in appendix. After incorporating the expert's comments and corrections, the instruments were returned to the experts who satisfied if the questionnaires capture the information required to answer the research questions.

Data collection instruments were subjected to statistical analysis to determine their reliability. Internal consistency measures steadiness within the instrument and questions how well a set of items measures a particular behaviour or characteristic within the test was determined using Cronbach's alpha test. A measure of internal consistency 0.7 is the acceptable value for Cronbach's alpha; values significantly lower than 0.7 indicate an unreliable scale.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Information on public participation in enhancing governance in UasinGishu County will be obtained through direct and/or indirect observation. The researcher used a survey questionnaire, interview, and literature analysis as the most suitable research methods. During the interview sessions, the researcher critically observed with the human eye the entity under study.

Sources of primary data such as textual info, qualitative information, official documents, reports, memoranda, letters, published documents such as County integrated development plans (CIDP) reports of UasinGishu county government and the Kenyan Constitution 2010 will be analysed. Secondary information sources such as books, journals, newspaper, unpublished theses and dissertations will also be analysed.

Techniques of Data Analysis

Data analysis entails working on data by breaking into manageable units organizing, synthesizing and searching for patterns. Glaser (2017) defined it as discovering vital points to be learned. According to a study conducted by Thomas (2006) qualitative researchers were reported to use inductive analysis of data to derive meaning from critical themes that emerge from the raw data. Basically, organization of raw data is a challenging task that comprises putting together hundreds of pages of interview transcripts, field notes and documents. Richards (2014) explained that the process of handling large quantities of qualitative data includes sorting and storing physically slips of paper or using one of the several computer software programs designed to help in such tasks.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information Related to Respondents

Demographic Information of Respondents was based on age and Gender. The findings of the study indicated that 20(55.6%) of the respondents were males while 17(44.4%) were females. A fair balance of gender participation in the study was therefore recorded as shown in Table 2.

The gender distribution indicated in Table 2 is expected to be a representative of both the opinions of males and females in the institutions. According to (Beins, 2009), information collected on gender of respondents determines to whom the research findings can be generalized and allows for comparisons to be made across other studies. Nonetheless, it is a clear indication that gender balance in county government is becoming a major concern and successful efforts of the gender mainstreaming campaigns can be felt. This finding was viable for making inferences on gender balance in county governments.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Males	20	55.6
	Females	17	44.4
	Total	37	100
Age of Respondents	Below 30 Years	2	5.6
	31-40Years	17	47.2
	41-50 Years	15	38.9
	51 and above Years	3	8.3
	Total	37	100

The study established that most of the respondents 17 (47.2%) were young adults falling in the category of between 31-40 years of age. The middle aged were represented by 15(38.9%) respondents with the youth accounting for 2(5.6%) and 3(8.3%) representing the elderly, over 51 years of age. The findings are as shown in Table 2.

Age is an important element in determining the various generational categories of workers in an institution including the baby boomers, generation Xs, generation Ys and the millennials

From Table 2 above, it can be deduced that most of the staff at county governments are in their thirties and forties a sign that the trend is changing from what (Tetty, 2009) observed that majority of university workers are 50 years of age. While his findings present a challenge of an aging workforce in the institutions, this research provides evidence of replacement of the aging workforce with a younger workforce. The middle aged

persons represented in the study is the age bracket at which individuals are at their peak of careers thus explains the large representation of 41-50 years. In their studies Fullerton (2008) and Johnston & Packer (2000) agree that the average age of people in the workforce is getting higher with increasing numbers of middle-aged and older workers employed in many different jobs. It should however be noted that an individual's job performance does not necessarily suffer just because they are getting older.

Public Participation Administrative Structures and Procedures

In order to find out the influence of administrative structures and procedure on governance in UasinGishu County, the respondents were asked to respond to structured questions related to establishment of structures and procedures for public participation. The structured questions were grouped into two sub variables namely; institutional structures established to promote public participation and institutional procedures and/or processes established to promote public participation. Descriptive analysis technique in form of counts, frequencies and percentages was used to illustrate the structures and procedures set to promote public participation. Table 3 below is a summary of the findings obtained from the study.

Table 3: Established Structure that Support Public Participation

Administrative Structures	Frequency	Percentage
County administrative office	1	100%
Sub-County administrative Offices	6	100%
Ward administrative office	30	100%

Based on the findings of this study as summarized in Table 3 above, UasinGishu County has established offices in all the Sub county levels and ward level to support effective public participation. These include the establishment of six sub county offices and thirty ward offices and appointed Sub - County and ward Administrators in all the established administrative units. This has effectively ease coordination of public participation enabling the citizens to attend public forums on development projects at these two levels.

However, Village Administrators and Village Councils are yet to be established because the Executive is waiting for a bill that will define the Village and Councils. The Ward Administrator reports to the Sub County Administrator on all matters relating to public participation and civic education in the ward, including preparing annual public participation plans, civic education plans and budget estimates for the ward; receiving complaints and feedback from citizens at ward level; preparing periodic reports on public participation and civic education at the Village as may be required.

The structures and institutions of devolved governance provide for the arrangement, composition and configuration of the county governments. This entails the framework and the working of the supporting institutions that enable the county governments to deliver on their mandate. County governance is vested in the county assembly and the county executive. The former playing the legislative role while the latter carries out the executive functions of the county. This function involves being the channel through which public input is infused into law making and oversight over the county executive. It achieves this by reviewing the county executive committee's development-planning proposals and supervising the committee's implementation.

Table 4: Procedures that Support Public Participation

Procedures for Public participation	Frequency	Percentage
Presents of requisite laws	24	64.86%
Presence of policy to guide public participation	28	75.68%
Procedures for information dissemination	23	62.16%
Procedures for civic education	18	48.65%
Procedure for involving other stakeholders	15	40.54%

The findings from the study indicates that 24 out of 37 administrators representing 64.86 % noted the presents of requisite laws that promote public participation, 28 out of 37 administrators representing 75.68% believes that there is a policy in place to guide public participation, 23 out of 37 representing 62.16% believes that there are robust procedures for dissemination of information on public participation, 18 out of 37 administrators representing 48.65% agrees that procedures for civic education have been established while 15 out of 37 administrators representing 40.54% believes there are procedures in place for involving other stakeholders in public participation.

The structure is geared towards the creation of an autonomous county executive, controlled by locally elected representatives. It achieves the aim of effectuating of dividing executive authority between the national

and the county governments thus ensuring political autonomy in the governance of county governments. The county executive committee is vested with the function of policy making and political representation, these twin roles implicate the need for democratic decision making. The wishes of the people should be determined and incorporated in the preparation and implementation of policies and plans for the county (Bryson, 1988).

III. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that Uasin Gishu County has made great strides as far as setting up of structures and processes required for public participation required by the county government act of 2012. This act notes that Civic education, public participation and availability of information are key requirements of the Constitution as avenues for citizens to actively participate in devolved governance. County governments therefore have the responsibility to establish mechanisms to promote civic education, public participation and access to information as required by the County Governments Act 2012.

Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there exists no conflict of interest.

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