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SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM**

**INFLUENCE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION IN MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA**

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K50/70118/2013**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has never been previously published or submitted elsewhere for assessment or award of a degree.

Signature:  **Date: 10th November 2022**

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Supervisor's Declaration

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this work to my beloved family members for their love, support, patience, encouragement, understanding, and motivation during this study. May God bless us all.

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I most sincerely thank God for the gift of life and good health for me and for giving me the strength and ability to carry out this study. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the supervisor Prof. Wambui Kiai for having agreed to supervise this work and for the patience accorded while reading the drafts and for providing guidance, without which the research thesis would not have been a reality. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my family for their understanding and support during this study.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCFP:	Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy
CDA:	County Development Agenda
CEPA:	Canadian Environmental Protection Act
CIDP:	County Integrated Development Plan
MoD:	Ministry of Devolution
MTP:	Medium-Term Plan
PMCs:	Project Management Committees
WHO:	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

One of the counties in Kenya, and probably all of Africa, with the strongest public involvement framework, is Makueni County. To ensure that the public is sufficiently involved in county development goals, the World Bank has advised other County Governments in Kenya to adopt the approach. However, according to the county officials in charge of public participation in the county, little study has been done to look at how public engagement is affected by communication tactics. This study sought to examine the influence of communication strategies in enhancing public participation. Makueni County Government has adopted the framework for public participation; however, there is limited information on how that framework has impacted the implementation of the county development agenda. Specifically, to assess the influence of audience representation, communication content control, and communication feedback mechanisms in enhancing public participation on the county development agenda. The study was anchored on the communicative planning theory and employed a cross-sectional approach using a descriptive survey design. The target population for this study comprised county officials leading the implementation of the county development agenda, the county communication department, and local community members in Makueni County. Stratified sampling techniques were employed to select respondents from among the population where a total of 100 respondents were sampled. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, and focus group discussions. To analyze quantitative data, frequency distribution tables, percentages and frequencies were used. The findings indicated that the main modes of communication are arranged meetings, public notices, posters, print media, provincial administration, radio stations, brochures and flyers, and the public address system. To avoid content distortion there is a clear work structure on who will handle such information, how it will reach the target, and where and when it will be shared. Feedback is achieved through development committees, representatives, emails and replies back, and the use of bulk SMS on the venue and activities. Lack of political goodwill from some departments, thus bypassing the development committees and giving into the field, role conflict among employees, little or sometimes no facilitation, and allowances for public participation programs make it difficult for the involved promoters and political influence are among the challenges facing promotion of public participation. There is a need to enhance, strengthen and increase communication channels and structures to allow every member of the society to acquire information regarding county public participation programmes and contribute to the county development particularly to those community members living in remote areas. Budgetary allocations for facilitating public participation ought to be set aside and an increase in the amount to ensure that all possible channels of communication are utilized to enhance attendance in public participation through the provision of allowance (food and transport) and other forms of incentives to facilitate the meetings. Stakeholders should be engaged at all stages of service delivery to ensure that public participation evokes the desired impact and to continuously monitor communication to ensure that communication is always guided, and timely. Civic education on related projects should be timely and properly conducted to ensure that citizens acquaint themselves with relevant technical knowledge before their opinion is sought.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Public participation is a key component of democratic decision-making (Mukhtarov, Dieperink, & Driessen, 2018). According to Eckerd and Heidelberg (2020), public participation refers to citizen engagement with public authorities about matters of common interest and it is a key component of democratic politics. It is often described as a good or even a necessary ingredient for democratic governance (Quick, & Bryson, 2022). Both theorists and practitioners of public administration have been vocal in their support of increasing public involvement in the decision-making process of administrative agencies (Durand, Duprez, & Yates, 2021). The legitimacy of administrative action is directly proportional to the degree to which persons and groups that are impacted by the action are engaged in the decision-making process (Eckerd & Heidelberg, 2020).

The influence of communication in public participation has elicited dynamic views for as long as it has been studied. Communication is a very important component in the process of providing public services. The ability to successfully communicate with the public is a vital component of modern governance, and this ability extends beyond simply being able to "push out" information efficiently and effectively to also include a desire to interact with individuals regarding the information (McComas, Arvai, & Besley, 2020). The capacity and willingness to interact with the public must be matched by a capacity and willingness to hear what they have to say, listen to what they have to say, and take their ambitions into account when developing and implementing policies (Aday, Brown & Livingston, 2008).

According to McComas, Arvai, and Besley, this capability does not only consist of the ability to "push out" information efficiently and effectively; rather, it also includes the desire to participate in conversation with individuals about the information (2020). They assert that one of the most important essential functions of contemporary government is the capacity to communicate clearly and effectively with the general public. It is not enough to just be able to connect with the public; one must also be willing and able to listen to the worries of the public and incorporate those issues into the process of establishing and implementing regulations. It is not enough to simply be able to interact with the public (Aday, Brown & Livingston, 2008).

Public participation has been a feature of government policy for the administration of projects in the US and the UK since the early 1960s. In recent decades, in the United States and the United Kingdom, public participation has come of age (Lovenduski, & Hills, 2018). In Italy and Spain, the concept still encounters skepticism, resistance, and refusal. It should be noted that public participation in Spain and Italy is purposed more for development identification and implementation (Elstub, & Escobar, 2019).

Public participation has been heavily integrated into the political process in democratic nations like Canada. Between the 1960s and the 1970s, Canada started incorporating participation into public policy to the point that it is now the norm rather than the exception (Churchman, 2012). The founding of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy (CCFP) in 1996, which gave Canadians a platform through which they could both engage in and contribute to the country's foreign policy, is one of the significant triumphs of public participation in the policy process in Canada. Another illustration is the public participation rights provided by the Canadian Environmental

Protection Act (CEPA), which was passed in 1988 and enables Canadians to take part in and decide on matters relating to environmental protection (Churchman, 2012).

The situation is different in Africa because while there is an improved level of public participation, youth and women seem to have been left out of the decision-making processes. (Mutisya, 2018). Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Lesotho are some of the African countries perceived to have an acceptable and considerable public participation model in decision-making (Maphazi, 2012; Mazruki, 2015). It has been argued, however, that public participation in Africa appears strongly in books but sparsely in implementation, especially at the agenda-building stage of the policy-making process (Mazruki, 2015).

In Kenya, public participation is still relatively young as a process, and the country's populace and maybe its political leaders have not fully explained its complexities and essential nature (Papa, 2016). Because of this reason, the activity has been carried out in a manner that is unstructured for a considerable amount of time. Before the executive branch and other national entities may make official decisions, public engagement in the decision-making process is mandated by the Constitution to take place at all levels of government. Public participation was adopted in Kenya in the 2010 Constitution and the subsequent establishment of two levels of government. It is entrenched as a national value and principle (Article 10 (2), in environmental management (Article 69 (1) (d), in Parliament business (Article 118 (1: (b) and (d)). To make it easier to enforce public involvement at the county government level, the County Governments Act No. 17 (2012) was passed into law in 2012. To be more specific, the Makueni County Government drafted the Makueni County Public

Participation in Governance Bill (2014), which was an act of the Makueni County Assembly and was required under the constitution that was adopted in 2010.

The public participation model adopted by the Makueni County Government entailed the involvement of the public in project identification and prioritization, budgetary allocations to prioritized projects, and oversight of project implementation through Project Management Committees (PMCs) (Mutisya, 2018). The county government implemented public participation through a concept in which the government became an agent of the people so that decision-making was reserved for the public (County Government of Makueni, 2017).

Under the Kenya Vision 2030, the goal of the Makueni County Government 2013 has been to bring government services "closer" to the people of the county, to promote social and economic growth, and to ensure that the people of the county control the system of governance. Participation from the general public has been encouraged by the County in several different ways. To begin, it educates the public by supplying them with facts that will assist them in better comprehending developing concerns, all while soliciting their opinion on potential solutions or choices (Mbevi, 2016). Throughout the whole process of decision-making, the County also includes the public by taking into account the issues they express (Mbevi, 2016). In addition to that, it has been working together with the general public not only to generate different choice options but also to determine the best possible solutions.

The county administration has been giving more power to the people who live in the county by giving them control over the ultimate decisions that are made. Its participation framework has been created to encourage involvement voluntarily, and it does not use any strategies to entice residents to participate in the process other than

instilling a feeling of democracy and belonging in them (World Bank, 2018). Despite the effort, there appear to be significant gaps in the linkage between public participation and the policy-making process. It is unclear whether public participation permeates all the stages in the policy-making process, and to what levels. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate which communication strategies are employed to influence public participation.

1.1.1 Communication and Public Participation

The concept of communication has elicited dynamic views for as long as it has been studied. There are two traditions in communication namely transmission and participatory traditions. In the transmission view, communication is purely the transmission of information, emotions, attitudes, intentions, perceptions, or commands between participants. This function is extended to include participants creating and sharing information to reach a mutual understanding in the participatory view which regards communication as a process instead of an action happening to someone (Windahl, 2009).

It is a premise that is acknowledged on a global level that communication plays an imperative role in the development of good governance and public involvement. In nations that adhere to the rule of law, the importance of communication is proved more clearly via empirical research. In nations like these, the concepts of involvement as well as the respect for the fundamental rights of citizen engagement are considered to be essential components of a democratic society (GoK, 2011). One element of genuine democracy is the election of representatives to a variety of assemblies, such as parliament, the senate, or local assemblies. However, this is not the only element. In a setting in which good governance is achieved through the implementation of

devolution, it is understood that genuine democracy requires additional components. Therefore, in addition to the importance of party politics, democracy necessitates that individuals can make their preferences are known to the general public, as well as the participation of citizens in discussions regarding the society in which they reside, as well as the liberty of individuals to make significant choices regarding a variety of matters that could have an impact on them (GoK, 2011).

Communication plays a critical role in enhancing citizen participation; it provides a platform for public debate about the distribution, execution, and limitation of power. To put it another way, choices made by those who hold power are scrutinized and contested through the use of public debates on how public policy should be designed. Therefore, communication is an essential component of democratic governance. This is an essential step in the process of creating an interface between the various communication structures and channels that already exist, such as the media, and their respective roles in enhancing citizens' participation and chargeback, as well as the role of the media in the creation of awareness, analysis, interpretation, and continuous rationalization of development issues at the national and county levels. The media is one example of a structure and channel that falls within this category (GoK, 2011).

According to Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme (2015), a communication strategy may reorganize the vision and goals of an organization's communication into a quantifiable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound action plan that can be put into motion. Wertheim (2008) observed that communication strategies foster the development of a culture within an organization, whether it be a department or an institution, of a proactive approach. This culture is characterized by the utilization of available resources in ways that are both rapid and sustainable for the welfare of the

citizens. Developing effective communication strategies requires nothing more than setting aside some time to reflect on a communication problem or issue and picking the approach that will be most successful in conveying the message or the information.

According to Rashid et al. (2013), communication strategies determine the reason why communication is necessary and define the desired objectives. In addition, they mentioned that the following goals of communication methods are as follows: presenting information; improving awareness; inspiring action; establishing consensus; altering behaviors; fostering community engagement; resolving conflict, or asking for opinions.

The ability to communicate clearly and successfully with one's constituents is one of the most important aspects of contemporary administration. This capability is not restricted to only "pushing out" information efficiently and effectively; rather, it encompasses the people's desire to interact with the information that is being "pushed out." When it comes to the provision of public services, communication is an extremely important component (Valentini, 2009). It is not enough to just be able to interact with the public; one must also be willing and able to listen to their concerns and integrate those concerns into the process of formulating and enforcing policies.

Crawford and Okigbo (2014) claim that one of the elements that contributed to the failure of a variety of various communication projects was the intended addressees' resistance to the messages, which they may have perceived as violating their established norms and practices. In addition, they tend to be resistant to improperly targeted messages, one-way, closed interactions that also fail to engage the audience's diverse range of demographics. As a result, for public involvement campaigns to be effective, they must be subtle in addressing concerns directly or indirectly in a way

that is both non-threatening and inclusive. Additionally, they must use effective communication techniques to persuade people using logical or emotional arguments in an effort to elicit favorable behavior and attitudes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Legislation, institutional support, cost considerations, a lack of necessary skills, and an inability to pinpoint the primary advantages are all possible discussion points for barriers to effective public participation (Bobbio, 2019). It is a value that has been given priority in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 since effective public involvement has influenced a variety of governmental performances in numerous nations across the world (Mbithi et al., 2019). Participation is something that ought to permeate all aspects of public life and ought to be encouraged by both non-state actors and the state when it comes to serving the public good. According to Lokaimoe, et al. (2021), the Constitution establishes important criteria for the Legislature at all levels of government to create frameworks for public involvement in governance processes. These frameworks must allow citizens to have a voice in decision-making processes. This focus on citizen engagement highlights the reality that the election of representatives does not diminish the necessity for people to continually be active in governing processes. This is because the election of representatives does not determine who will rule (Nyaranga, et al, 2019).

According to Nyaranga et al. (2019), a prevalent issue in many counties is the lack of effective public participation in County Government matters and the County Development Agenda process. Both Bratton (2012) and Oduor (2015) pointed out the presence of a connection between the level of public engagement and the level of success achieved by county governments about the topic of discussion. According to

Oduor (2015), the key public engagement mechanisms in Makueni County have been built in a variety of different ways. To begin, there is the chance for the public and other interest groups to participate in the decision-making process about the prioritizing of county projects and the identification of budget allocation and development initiatives. In the second place, the county has increased opportunities for public engagement by forming project management committees. The third element of public engagement is to provide possibilities to the locals, in the beginning, so that they can supply the necessary services and commodities (Oduor, 2015).

Studies on public participation in counties in Kenya have majorly focused on factors influencing public participation and noted that lack of training, county participation framework, and inadequate resource mobilization have hindered public participation (Papa, 2016). Opondo (2017), studied the impact of public participation on the budgeting process and observed that the level of public participation was low due to the lack of a participation framework at the county level to promote the budgeting process. Oduor (2015) found that a significant portion of the public is still inadequately educated on the civic tasks they have, the rights and responsibilities that they have, and the duties that the county government has. None of these studies, however, have investigated how the impact of communication methods might be used to increase the level of public engagement in the planning process for county development.

The importance of communication in an organization's existence and its importance cannot be over-emphasized. The organization's communication strategies require to be carefully selected and managed as they have a significant impact on its well-being. Through participation in the county development agenda, the public can put into

practice their civic duties, rights, and responsibilities. However, this can only be achieved if there is a well-structured public participation program in terms of its communication strategies. Experience suggests the emergence of potential conflicts if wide public participation is not appropriately undertaken and adequate communication strategies are observed to ensure structured and proper engagement with the public (Wanjohi, 2019).

With the prevailing weaknesses in communication between the county government and the public on development affairs as a result of communication shortfalls, there is no doubt, a need for clear adoption of communication strategies to enhance public participation in the County Development Agenda. Therefore, this study sought to examine the influence of communication strategies in enhancing public participation in the County development agenda.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

To examine the influence of communication strategies on public participation in Makueni County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess the influence of audience representation on public participation in the county development agenda.
- ii. To examine the influence of communication content control on public participation in the county development agenda.
- iii. To investigate the influence of communication feedback mechanisms on public participation in the county development agenda.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the influence of audience representation on public participation in the county development agenda?
- ii. What is the influence of communication content control on public participation in the county development agenda?
- iii. How do communication feedback mechanisms influence public participation in the county development agenda?

1.5 Justification of the Study

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) in Article 1 (1-2) states that all sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya and is exercised directly or through democratically elected representatives, delegated to the executive, the judiciary, and the legislature, and exercised on both the national and county levels. In paragraph (a) of section 10 of the Constitution, "public engagement" is cited as both a national value and a guiding principle of government. The standards and goals outlined in the Constitution about public involvement will serve as the foundation for this research. The Kenya Vision 2030's political pillar also promotes equal citizenship rights and involvement in important policy decisions. This is done to create social justice and give marginalized and underprivileged people opportunity to have their concerns taken into account when making public policy. A further goal of the political pillar of the Medium-Term Plan II is to create "an open society that is people-centered and politically engaged" (Medium-Term Plan II: 107), which will be achieved by fostering greater public participation and upholding constitutional decentralization.

This study, therefore, seeks to provide perspectives and experiences regarding the influence of communication strategies on public participation. The findings may

create awareness and understanding among the county administrators on the underlying influence of communication strategies on public participation as well as how to implement effective participatory communication strategies. The study presents public participation as a means to sustainable social transformation, specifically in county development; therefore, the findings of this study propose guidelines and recommendations on the formulation and implementation of communication strategies to achieve lasting solutions to enhance public participation, particularly in the county development agenda.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study may serve as a roadmap for the Kenyan government, including the Ministry of Devolution (MoD), as they survey national inclusion for advancement and help them better understand how to realize the political pillar of the Kenya Vision 2030, which aims to realize "a democratic political system that is issue-based, people-centered, result-oriented, and accountable to the public." Kenya Vision 2030's political component seeks to establish "a democratic political system that is issue-based, people-centered, and Establishing "a democratic political system that is issue-based, people-centered, and accountable to the people" is the objective of Kenya Vision 2030's political pillar. In the previous section, it was mentioned that one method for maintaining good governance is to identify current gaps and the foundations for significant citizen involvement and suggest appropriate management strategies and impacts of participation gaps in order to ensure good governance in Kenya and the African region. This is one method for maintaining good governance, as it was mentioned earlier. This will contribute to ensuring that good governance is maintained not just in Kenya but across the rest of the African area as well.

The findings of this study may be useful to county governments in shedding light on the importance of communication strategies in influencing public participation in county development agendas. This may be helpful to county governments since it will provide input on the research program, help determine priorities, and encourage an inclusive society, all of which are mandated by the Constitution. The knowledge helps in the application of data sources and county development techniques to the relevant authorities to provide improved service to the public.

The findings of the study may also help policymakers and those involved in technology transfer gain a better understanding of the involvement of citizens in various activities that affect their lives, as well as provide policy recommendations on how to improve projects in various counties for good governance. In addition, the findings of the study may also help citizens better understand how their government works. In addition, the results of the research may assist make advice on how various projects in different counties might be improved so that they are more environmentally sustainable. The findings of this study may be a valuable contribution to the body of literature that is available to scholars, including students. These scholars may use these findings and data to identify gaps in future research and expand on their work in comparative regions using the information provided by this study.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study seeks to examine the influence of communication strategies on public participation in Makueni County, Kenya. The study focus was on the communication strategies (specifically on audience representation, communication content control, and communication feedback mechanisms) and how they have been applied in Makueni County to enhance public participation. The study made use of both primary

and secondary data obtained from the public and county government officials to conclude.

This study limited itself to communication strategies and how they influence public participation in Makueni County. Furthermore, the study only assessed communication strategies; audience representation, communication content control, and communication feedback mechanisms employed in Makueni County. The use of quantitative data to determine the relationship among study variables limited the study to numerical data and less in-depth and qualitative information obtained from interviews and focused group discussions.

Several factors affect public participation; however, this study limited itself to communication strategies. Different views of the effect of communication techniques on public involvement may be recognized as a result of personal characteristics and experiences; nevertheless, the researcher might not have control over some parts of these perceptions. Regarding the environment, the research was conducted in a rural setting in Makueni County. As a result, the results may not apply to other regions, particularly metropolitan regions such as Nairobi City County, given that the study was conducted in a rural setting. Because of the constraints imposed by both time and money, it may not be feasible to research a large population. As a result, only a limited sample of the people living in Makueni County was asked to take part in the investigation.

Some of the sampled respondents may not be willing to give information regarding the subject under study due to fear of victimization. The research sought personal consent to participate in the study and explain to every respondent that the information collected was treated with confidentiality and that the information collected was used

for academic purposes only. Some of the respondents might give invalid responses due to a lack of knowledge of the subject under study, the research with the help of research assistants ensured that each sampled respondent is briefed (including translating the information into a language that is best understood) on the about the aim of the study and guided on how to provide the required information.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Audience Representation: refers to the practice of breaking participants into subgroups that are similar to one another based on predetermined criteria such as demographics, communication behaviors, and media consumption.

Communication Strategies: refers to the process of methodically organizing and carrying out the dissemination of information about a certain topic, event, circumstance, or audience. It is a step-by-step approach to setting, organizing, and practicing communication-related plans and priorities of an institution.

Communication refers to the process that aims to pass and exchange information between people to create common understandings.

Content Control: refers to a method of selecting how communications are packaged throughout the communication process so that only the relevant issues are communicated to the public, giving the sender control over the messages' nuance and language.

Feedback Mechanisms: refers to the strategies that have been implemented to track audience reactions and give communicators a sense of how their messages have been received and whether they need to be adjusted.

Public Participation: refers to the process of bringing together individuals and the goals they have set for themselves at the grassroots level in order to collaborate with a county government and exert influence over decision-making processes regarding policy, legislation, service delivery, and supervision of development projects. This process is something that happens on a more grassroots level.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the literature reviewed in line with the research objectives. The chapter is organized into the following subsections; empirical literature review in line with the study objectives, theoretical framework, and summary of gaps in the reviewed literature.

2.2 The Concept of Public Participation

People coming together for the purposes of collective deliberation and action within a variety of interests, institutions, and networks; the development of civic identity; and the involvement of people in governance processes are all examples of engagement in governance, which is also referred to as public participation. Engagement in governance is the process by which citizens take part in decision-making processes. Citizens come together for the sake of collective discussion and action within a diverse variety of interests, institutions, and networks " (Cooper, 2005). It is impossible to place too much emphasis on the significance of public engagement. Its role to developing democracy is vital because it enables inclusiveness and transparency in governing, with citizens and government entities sharing power (Arnstein, 1969). It ensures that the government responds to civilian demands and legitimizes government decisions and institutions. In addition, public involvement boosts individual levels of patriotism and confidence in public institutions at the individual level. Because of this, social inclusion and social capital are increased (Raimond, 2001). As a result, public involvement is transformed into a process rather than a single event that occurs in isolation.

The whole sovereign authority in Kenya is vested in the Kenyan people, according to Article 1(1) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (Government of Kenya, 2010). This authority is to be exerted either directly by the people themselves via various forms of public involvement, or indirectly by their representatives who have been democratically chosen. In addition, the Constitution established a decentralized form of government, the major purpose of which was to distribute resources, authority, and representation down to the state and municipal levels. This resulted in the establishment of forty-seven political and administrative counties, within which the general public would be allowed to participate in the process of governance; consequently, citizen participation was enshrined in the Constitution as both a principle of public service and a national value in Articles 10(2a) and 232(1). There were a total of forty-seven political and administrative counties.

Public engagement in Kenya's decentralized form of government has been hindered by several obstacles, including inadequate backing from the political establishment and inadequate levels of civic education (Kenya School of Government, 2015). On the other hand, there is a model for public engagement in Makueni County that has been praised by the World Bank. This success story may be found in Makueni County (2016). The county's model allows for the citizens to be involved in the process of prioritization, planning, and the determination of the total expenditures. This allows the citizens to identify the development priorities that are most important to them, starting at the local level and working their way up. In addition, the county encourages participation from its residents in the development and execution of various initiatives.

The public should be informed, engaged, consulted, collaborated with, and given more authority all through the process of public involvement. This occurs in a multitude of places and circumstances, including inside the government, the electoral system, and civil society, to name a few examples. On the other hand, the culture of the public bureaucracy does not encourage public participation (Kathi and Cooper, 2005). Instead, it makes use of traditional channels for the sharing of information, such as public hearings, which are often unidirectional and are not geared toward the resolution of issues (Baker, Addams, and Davis, 2005). Because of this, there is a need to change such a culture and make certain that people are government partners and not simply customers by ensuring that there is meaningful public participation.

2.2.1 Role of Public Participation in Governance

"Public engagement in governance" means the direct or indirect involvement of interested stakeholders in policy, plan, or program decision-making. Stakeholders may affect or be impacted by policy choices (Freeman 2010). Additionally, stakeholders are those who have a claim on the attention, resources, or outputs of an organization or other entity (Bryson 2004). Stakeholders have the opportunity to contact with governmental institutions, political figures, non-profit groups, and private businesses through the public engagement process. These parties are responsible for developing or carrying out public policies and programs.

Citizens are assumed to be essential stakeholders in democracies because they have the ability to take part, either directly or indirectly, in the process of formulating, adopting, and enforcing the laws and policies that impact them. This participation may take place either directly or indirectly via the election of representatives to various bodies. In democracies, participation from the public populace is hence an integral

part of the dialogue that takes place between the people and the government (Bryson et al. 2013). Despite this, the idea of public involvement in government encompasses more than just one specific interaction. The concept of governance encompasses both formal and informal means of decision-making and management of matters of shared community interest or concern. The practice of managing areas of widespread community interest or concern is referred to as governance (Bevir, 2013). This is done by utilizing vast networks, which frequently include but are not limited to, governmental organizations. Regularly moving, networked assemblages of governmental agencies, nonprofits, for-profit companies, and other types of groups are gradually taking on the traditional roles, tasks, and consequences of the government (Agranoff, 2007; Provan & Kenis, 2008). To keep up with the expanding significance of public involvement in governance, which has increased as the scope of governance has expanded outside the jurisdiction of the state (Morgan & Cook, 2014).

2.2.2 Public Participation in County Governments

The Constitution of Kenya from 2010 called for the establishment of a decentralized system of governance. This was done to ensure that locals would feel empowered by the information supplied and, as a result, would participate in the process of forming policies on issues that had an impact on their capacity to live. This was done to ensure that citizens would be empowered by the spread of information. It sought to overcome the developmental disparities that have historically slowed the nation's social and economic advancement by improving transparency, accountability, service delivery, equality, and inclusion. These imbalances had previously prevented the country from reaching its full potential. These imbalances had previously hindered the country's ability to grow socially and economically. Under Article 232(d), people are required

to be involved in the formulation of public policy, and Article 196(1)(b) mandates that county assemblies make it easier for the public to participate in such deliberations.

All three of these pieces of legislation—the County Government Act (Gov. of Kenya, 2012a), the Public Finance Management Act (Gov. of Kenya, 2012b), and the Urban Areas and Cities Act (Gov. of Kenya, 2011)—have called for public input in the creation of new laws, the setting of budget priorities, the assurance that public-sector performance and expenses are reviewed, and the filing of complaints. All of these laws were passed by the Government of Kenya. All of this is a function of Kenya's decentralized form of government, which was established in 1978. Additionally, county governments are in charge of making sure the public has access to information for public engagement, setting up the necessary frameworks, procedures, and rules, as well as submitting an annual report on citizen participation to the County Assembly. These responsibilities were assigned to them by the County Assembly. In addition to the obligation of ensuring that the public is provided with information for the purpose of public participation, these tasks must be fulfilled.

The public's participation in Kenya's decentralized form of government has been met with its fair share of obstacles, such as limited support from the political class and low levels of civic education. However, these obstacles have not been insurmountable. However, these obstacles have not been insurmountable (Kenya School of Government, 2015). Nevertheless, there is a model for successful public engagement that has been implemented in Makueni County, which has garnered praise from the World Bank (2016). The model that the County has built has made it feasible for the County to have its inhabitants define their development priorities at the grassroots level. This has been achievable owing to the model that the County has developed.

The residents have also been included in the process of ranking the projects in order of importance, as well as planning and determining the final costs associated with the projects that have been selected. In addition, the County encourages and facilitates public participation in all aspects of the execution of these initiatives.

Under the tenets of the Constitution, public involvement must not only take place but also have some effect on the formulation of public policy for it to be considered valid. Regrettably, the existence of legally enforceable standards for public engagement has not been converted into effective practice as of yet. For example, research has shown that 83 percent of Kenyans are unaware of the resources that have been allocated to their county. In addition, just 7% of Kenyans are familiar with the Fiscal Strategy Paper for their county, 16% are familiar with the Integrated Development Plan for their county, and 41% are familiar with the budget for their county. Only 38% of residents are aware of county meetings, and only 15% of individuals attend them, according to research, which may explain this poor performance (Transparency International, 2016). In addition, the Policy on Devolved System of Government notes that inadequate civic awareness among the populace, disorganized civic education, and challenges with information access all contribute to low quality public involvement that has not been optimized. The Policy on Devolved System of Government is a devolved system of government, which is why these problems exist (Government of Kenya, 2016). This occurs as a result of the fact that a number of distinct factors contribute to the issue.

This undermines the validity of the public participation process as it is envisioned in the Constitution since the vast majority of county public participation procedures are carried out as a formality to fulfill the minimal criteria of the Constitution. The

application for this position was submitted in 2014. Because of this behavior, many people in the general public would see events like these as meaningless rituals (Adams, 2004). Because of this, the objective of the new Constitution, which is to guarantee that people are active in the process of government by employing public participation, will not be accomplished if there continues to be a lack of genuine public participation. In addition, the promise that is included in the new Constitution will not be fulfilled. As a consequence of this, there is an urgent need for an investigation of the elements that influence the extent of meaningful public involvement that exists inside Kenya's devolved units.

Both Article 232(1)(d) of the Kenya Constitution 2010 and Article 232(1)(f) of the Kenya Constitution 2010 require that public participation be ensured, which is consistent with both of these provisions. Article 232(1)(d) of the Kenya Constitution 2010 provides for citizens' participation in the decision-making process. Article 232(1)(f) of the Kenya Constitution 2010 calls for transparency by calling for the provision of timely and accurate information to the public. Both of these provisions are in line with one another. In light of this, one of the goals of the Kenya Vision 2030 is to create a political process that is transparent and encourages participation. This will be done through encouraging a larger number of Kenyans to participate in the decision-making processes that are involved in the nation's economy, social issues, and political affairs. In addition, initiatives for civic education will be introduced in order to guarantee that residents are both well-informed and actively involved in their communities. In addition, the political component of Vision 2030 mandates equal participation in significant policy decisions as well as equal rights as citizens. This is done to guarantee that the concerns of poor and marginalized groups are taken into

account in public policy and to create social justice by offering chances to those who are at a disadvantage.

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2.3 Communication Strategies and Public Participation

2.3.1 Influence of Audience representation in Enhancing Public Participation

It is common practice in the field of communication to employ audience targeting as a communication strategy. This is accomplished by segmenting audiences, which involves dividing people into similar subgroups based on predetermined criteria such as demographics, psychographics, product usage, media use, and communication behaviors (Rimal, et al., 2009). It is generally agreed upon that audience representation plays a fundamentally important strategic role in communication initiatives, and these campaigns can influence both societal change and health outcomes (Hemsley-Brown, & Oplatka, 2016). When campaign efforts are tailored to specific subgroups, which is made possible through audience segmentation, campaign

efforts can be more effective. When the audiences that are targeted are picked based on their sensitivity and receptivity, audience segmentation is also employed successfully as a marketing tool (Pilotta & Schultz, 2005).

According to Sherlock (2014), to guarantee the effectiveness of their advertising efforts, firms need to identify and comprehend the demographics of their intended audience members. This makes it possible for businesses to cater their services or goods to the specific requirements of their customers, hence increasing the likelihood that they will achieve their goals. According to Cahill (2007), there exist distinctions among customers; hence, audience representation may be a useful tool in effectively addressing high-potential and loyal clients, which can subsequently convert into a strong return on investment.

Topolniski (2013) argues in additional detail that for a business to determine the demographics of its target audience, it must first identify the issues that its service or product wants to answer, as well as the demand that it meets. The issues that need to be addressed are ones that unavoidably need to be those that are well-known to the customers since these are the difficulties that the customers will be interested in having answered. As a result, it is possible to conclude from what has been stated above that audience segmentation is essential in communication. This is because different social strata are at different need levels, and as a result, they react differently to messages that are directed toward them (Doos, Uttley & Onyia, 2014). This is a piece of software that has the potential to be useful in organizations that are a part of the public sector, such as devolved governments. Topolniski (2013), on the other hand, segments the target market into subgroups by categorizing consumers according to their demographics, psychographics, geographic information, and behaviors. The

current research is examining communication patterns in the public sphere, which is represented by the county administration. Because of their importance as important determinants of public participation, the elements of demographics and geographic information, as well as media consumption, will be of particular relevance. The purpose of the research was to look at how people behave while communicating in public settings.

Slater and Flora (1991) conducted a study to determine the prevalence of cardiovascular disease among central Californians. As part of their research, the authors used participants' health behaviors to categorize participants into several categories. The study's findings indicated that those with moderately healthy diets, minimal cigarette use, and moderate levels of physical activity tended to seek out information about their health and felt that changing good behaviors helped avoid cardiovascular illnesses. In contrast, the groups with poor eating habits, heavy alcohol and cigarette use, and a high perception of their vulnerability to cardiovascular disease were not interested in reducing those health risks and were wary of seeking out health information (Guttman, 2003). Because of the disparities in health behaviors that were found to exist between the two groups, health communicators were able to design and change a wide range of messages in order to have an effect on the health behaviors of each of the two groups individually.

According to Rimal et al. (2009), the primary audience representation requirements for the HIV prevention initiative in Malawi are the participants' risk assessments and attitudes toward the program's effectiveness. Their research resulted in the formation of four observational subgroups, which were as follows: responsive (high risk, high efficacy), avoidance (high risk, low efficacy), proactive (low risk, high efficacy), and

indifferent. Each subgroup was characterized by its unique combination of risk and effectiveness (low risk, low efficacy). According to the findings of the research, each of the four groups had varying degrees of awareness of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), as well as varying rates of HIV testing and condom usage. The indifferent and avoidance groups were less likely to engage in preventive behaviors, in contrast to the proactive and responsive groups, who displayed behaviors that were amenable to preventive interventions. According to the findings of the research, audience segmentation might be used as a method in Malawi to target distinct groups with messages that are suited to efficacy beliefs and risk perceptions, which can motivate people to adopt behaviors that are suggested for HIV prevention.

Even though the significance of communicating with one's target audience has been emphasized in the prior discussion, the vast majority of the research that is now accessible tends to concentrate on the commercial sector rather than communications in the public sector. In addition, Ball and Pflugrath (2012) imply that governments are presently embracing management approaches used in the private sector to increase the efficiency of their operations. On the other hand, the effect that this will have on strategic communications in public sector organizations like devolved governments is not something that has been decided as of yet. This is due to the fact that the impact of this modification has not yet been verified.

2.3.2 Influence of Communication Content Control on Public Participation

According to Crawford and Okigbo (2014), the failure of many communication campaigns to materialize is caused by audience members' resistance to the messages being communicated by the campaigns. These audience members believe that the messages contradict the ingrained behaviors and habits that they have adopted.

Therefore, for public relations campaigns to be successful, they need to address these behaviors either indirectly or directly, in a way that is accommodating and does not threaten, and they need to use appropriate emotional and/or logical persuasive appeals that are designed to elicit desirable attitudes and behaviors from their target audiences (Gregory, 2015). In addition, public reform attempts that capitalize on people's fears may achieve short-term success, but this success is fleeting and only lasts for a certain amount of time. This is due to the fact that, as time goes on, individuals in the audience either learn to get over their concerns or learn to steer clear of the messages that prey on those concerns. Many individuals have the propensity to go back to their previous behaviors when the campaigns have come to an end, even though they are aware that these behaviors are detrimental to their health and should be altered. The strategic objective of the communication message is effectively undermined when there is insufficient control over the message's substance.

Daily, several different organizations produce new material with the help of more recent technologies, and they either keep it or disseminate it in more ways than ever before (Saaty et al. 2022). A company may experience a constant flow of content as a result of the millions of file transfers, instant messaging, emails, and other Internet transactions that take place every day. Controlling the content of outgoing messages proactively reduces the danger of inappropriate information being disclosed and ensures that only relevant data is sent in an appropriate manner (Sheer & Ling, 2004). Checking the content of electronic communications, such as instant messaging, emails, electronic documents, and online posts, to ensure that they include approved material is what is meant by "content control." For instance, companies want to make certain that the content they provide does not include racial slurs or sexual innuendo, that important product ideas are not shared with rivals or posted on newsgroups, and

that viruses are not spread (Saaty, et al., 2022). To put it another way, organizations strive to disseminate information that is positively received by the general public and does not damage the image of the institution itself.

Control of the content should be carried out internally by the company. This requirement is likewise applicable to electronic communications that originate from outside the company as well as electronic communications that are sent from inside the organization to the outside world. Other types of harmful information that may be controlled include spam control (Saaty, Zoffer, Vargas, & Guiora, 2022). Outbound content management, on the other hand, is far more concerned with ensuring that only acceptable information is delivered outside; for instance, sensitive material only gets to certain persons or is completely censored (Trevino et al., 2014).

The process of putting policies into effect in the public sector may be rather pricey, and this expense can be greatly exacerbated if individuals oppose the policies or fail to comprehend the communication around them (Viswanath, 2006). As a result, it is of the utmost importance that the messaging of such policies should make it possible for the populace to buy into the vision of the government and for it to proceed in the policy path for an extended time. However, prior research has not thoroughly investigated this facet of communication control and its function in strategic communications with the general public.

2.3.3 Influence of Communication Feedback Mechanisms on Public Participation

The term "feedback" refers to the communication between a company and its customers on a product or service (Erickson & Eckrich, 2011). The input from customers may either be requested or received voluntarily (Berry & Parasuraman,

2007). By using strategies and tools like focus group discussions and surveys in which customers are asked for their opinion, businesses foster the practice of soliciting feedback from customers and so increase the likelihood of receiving such feedback. On the other hand, unsolicited customer feedback is based on the consumer's own will and desire to share their own experiences.

The leadership of a company may receive comments and suggestions from its employees through a number of different channels. The free flow of upward communication, on the other hand, is severely hampered by the fact that information of this sort is often used for the goal of exerting control. It is not common practice for staff members to provide facts to their superiors that might reflect negatively on either themselves or their fellow employees. They won't reveal anything to the employer that isn't necessary for him to know (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015).

There are a variety of channels via which employees of a company may communicate their comments and suggestions to the leadership of that firm. Employees may be required to report to their managers what they have done, what their colleagues have done, their struggles, and the issues in their unit, as well as what they think needs to be done and how they think it should be done, in order to address these issues. The free flow of upward communication, on the other hand, is severely hampered by the fact that information of this sort is often used for the goal of exerting control. It is not common practice for staff members to provide facts to their superiors that might reflect negatively on either themselves or their fellow employees. They won't reveal anything to the employer that isn't necessary for him to know (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The communicative planning theory, which was created in the 1980s and early 1990s based on Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action, served as the primary theoretical foundation for this investigation (Healey, 1996). The theory postulates that communication and reasoning may take on a variety of forms, that knowledge is a product of social construction, and that people's varied interests and preferences emerge as a result of the social situations in which they find themselves. In addition to this, the theory is influenced by Foucault's research on power in the sense that it acknowledges the existence of power relations in the actual world and acknowledges their capacity to oppress people (Machler, & Milz, 2015). The communicative planning theory takes into account the community and development environments as significant factors. It recognizes that the actions, words, and experiences of planners, as well as the kinds of communication they use, all have an impact on the planning process that they are assisting with (Woltjer, 2017). Last but not least, communicative planning theory promotes the concept that planning occurs naturally in day-to-day life and the course of social interactions. Additionally, this theory suggests that consensus-building may be used to organize people's perspectives and move beyond traditional methods of knowing and reaching conclusions. This idea has become further developed because of the communicative planning theory (Machler, & Milz, 2015).

The planning methods and the results are the primary foci of attention in critiques of the communicative planning paradigm. Older criticisms of the theory question whether or not the theory, which they consider to be idealistic, is capable of translating a consensus-based process into real results and whether or not the agreement is a useful objective when crucial planning choices are being made gradually (Tewdwr-Jones, & Allmendinger, 1998). Additional concerns center on issues of power,

including who has the capacity to include or exclude stakeholders and whether or not they would use that position to influence the process of reaching a consensus (given that consensus must be reached). The criticisms contribute to the fact that the communicative planning methods have not produced any real-world results since more fundamental political and institutional reform is required first (Leffers, 2019). Purcell (2009) argues that communication planning is a method for maintaining bigger political and institutional institutions while simultaneously constructing a process that only seems to better represent the people. Instead of making substantial adjustments to the structure of the government, this tactic seeks to ensure that neoliberals continue to hold influential positions and that political order is maintained.

According to Healey (2008), one of the most important aspects of planning is having access to relevant information as well as being aware of the procedures involved in making decisions. In addition, in order to raise the level of participation from the community, planners need to include communication tactics in the technical work they do. In addition, Healey (2008) focused on how planners create understanding and change the practice of planning. The research that was carried out by Healey was predicated on a study that was carried out in the United Kingdom.

The Communicative Planning Theory is important to this study because it explains the role that public institutions play in influencing public participation in the development agenda. Additionally, it explains why decision-making processes are so important to planning, and why planners need to incorporate communication practices into their technical work to encourage community participation. However, planners do affect the establishment of circumstances under which individuals may engage, act, and arrange their lives. This is even though planners often have very little control

over the actual execution of the plans they create. They can accomplish this via the participants that they choose, but the primary power that they have in the planning process is the control that they have over the information. According to Healey (2008), the development of one's knowledge and comprehension of the communicative planning theory occurred via the process of reciprocal learning and conversation about obstacles, dilemmas, and options.

There are opportunities for consultation on policies at every level of government, both inside the government and with those who are not affiliated with it. According to the Constitution of Kenya (2010), Article 10 (2) (a), consultation with the public through public participation is essential at all stages of the policy process. This provision mandates that consultation with the public must take place through public participation. The Constitution of Kenya was amended to include this article in the year 2010. The right to participate in the management of public affairs, governance, and development is not only a right in and of itself but also an overarching principle in democratic societies, according to the Communicative Planning Theory. This theory was developed to explain how democratic societies work. Public participation entails more than simply casting a vote at predetermined intervals; it also involves being able to freely express your views about the society you live in; expressing your vision for development and democracy; ensuring that the government provides avenues for everyone to be heard in matters of concern; and it also involves ensuring that people have the freedom to assemble and associate with one another, which can help people come together and make use of the avenues that are available to them. Elections are often brought up in conversation when discussing involvement; however, there is much more to it than that (Sager, 2009). As a result of these considerations, the Communicative Planning Theory serves as the basis for this

research project, which aims to evaluate the impact that different communication tactics have on the level of public engagement in Makueni County.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology, location of the study, target population, sample size and sampling design, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

This research made use of a cross-sectional methodology and a descriptive survey design. These methods enabled the researcher to collect information, make summaries, present the findings, and interpret the findings for clarity (Orodho, 2012). In addition, by imposing consistent definitions on the respondents of a descriptive survey, the accuracy of an institutionalized estimate may be improved significantly. This design was appropriate because it considered parameters such as opinions and awareness of the various respondents on the subject of the study. This is the most appropriate design for this study as it gives the researcher a quick general view of the situation under study at a given point in time.

3.3 Location of the Study

This study was carried out in Makueni County. The population of Makueni stands at 987,653 as per the National Census of 2019 (Kenya Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2019). To the western part, it borders the county of Kajiado and Taita Taveta on the Southern side, the county of Kitui on the East, and Machakos towards the North. Administratively, the County is currently divided into nine sub-counties; Makueni, Kilungu, Mukaa, Kibwezi, Kathonzweni, Makindu, Mbooni East, Mbooni West, and Nzau (Makueni CIDP, 2013).

The participation of residents has been the primary driving force behind the County's adoption of devolution. According to the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), 2015, the goal of the county government is also to provide residents more agency by including them in the process of planning and carrying out development projects via the use of public participation. A significant obligation has also been established by the governance of the county to ensure that the communities that live within the county are aware of their responsibility to play an active role in the governance and development of the county. This obligation is intended to ensure that the residents of the county are aware of their responsibility. The county is exceptional in the sense that, even though several other counties have created public participation frameworks, the vast majority of counties in Kenya have not created and put into practice the necessary public involvement as stipulated in the country's constitution (Government of Makueni County, 2018).

3.4 Target Population

The study targeted the county government staff working under the department of public participation and leading the implementation of the county development agenda. This included; Director public participation (1), Director budgeting (1), Director planning (1), Sub-county civic education coordinator (1), Ward development officers (7), and community members (90) in Makueni Sub County.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A judgment or an inference may be drawn about the aggregate or totality based on the results of a sampling, which is the selection of certain portions of an aggregate or the totality as a whole (Kothari, 2006). During the course of this research project, the researcher made use of several methods of stratified sampling to pick respondents

from among the public. According to Kothari (2003), stratified sampling gives the researcher the ability to take a sample from a population that does not consist of groups that are identical to one another. The study can get certain non-overlapping subpopulations or strata via the use of simple random sampling because of this. This study further employed simple random sampling on the established strata. This study then employed the purposive sampling technique to select respondents. The study targeted county officials, community leaders, and community members.

Table 3.1: Sampling Matrix

Group	Target (N)	Sample (n)
County Executive	4	4
Sub county Civic Education Coordinator	1	1
Ward Development Officers	7	6
Community Members	90	90
Total	102	100

Source: Author (2022)

Based on the sampling matrix (table 3.1) the study sampled one hundred and two (102) respondents drawn from the county department of public participation as well as Wote and Kathonzweni Sub Counties of Makueni County. The assumption is that the community members were part of the survey. A key informant interview schedule was used to gather information from the sampled county officials and a focused group discussion for Ward Development Officers (WDO) while a questionnaire was used to gather information from community members.

3.6 Research Instruments

The study made use of questionnaires (Appendix I), interview schedules (Appendix II), and focus group discussions (FGDs) (Appendix III), to collect primary data from the sample respondents. The questionnaires comprised both open-ended and closed-ended questions seeking to gather the opinions of the respondents on the influence of

communication strategies on enhancing public participation in the county development agenda.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought authorization and ethical clearance from the relevant authorities before conducting data collection. Consent of participation was sought before administering questionnaires to the respondents.

3.8 Pilot Study

Because it assisted in obtaining the validity and reliability of the research instruments and methods, a pilot study was required for this research investigation (Reaven et al., 2009). The selection of the three respondents who would take part in the pilot research was accomplished via the use of a simple random sampling technique. The responders were not included in the study's sample population in any way. Through the course of the pilot study, the researcher was able to acquaint himself with the processes involved in the administration of the research and determine which aspects of the protocol required to change, addition, or deletion. The effectiveness of the data-collecting process was evaluated by matching the instruments developed by the researchers with the aims and questions of the study.

3.9 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

3.9.1 Reliability of Research Instruments

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), reliability is an assessment of the degree to which a research instrument provides consistent results or data after a repeated experiment. To phrase it another way, reliability is a measurement of how well a research instrument operates. Because of the pilot study, the researcher was able to determine how well the questionnaire questions communicated their intended

meaning. In order to improve the overall quality of the research instrument and, as a consequence, to make it more reliable, the components that were found to be lacking in specificity or to be unclear were revised.

The Split-Half approach of reliability testing was used. This included dividing the pilot questionnaires into two halves, and then using the Pearson correlation calculation to get a correlation coefficient for each half of the questionnaires as follows; $r = 1 - \frac{6\Sigma(D)^2}{N(N^2-1)}$ Where, r = Correlation coefficient, N = Sample, Σ = Summation of scores, and D = Deviation. The coefficient indicates the degree to which the two components of the test yield the same conclusions. This is how the test's internal consistency is described. According to Orodho (2005), a correlation coefficient of at least 0.65 is recommended as a benchmark for determining whether or not an instrument can be relied upon. As a result, to verify that the data acquired is credible, a value that is equal to or above this but less than one was achieved. The results of this investigation showed that the correlation coefficient was at least 0.65.

3.9.2 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity is the precision and significance of inferences drawn from research findings. The researcher needed to evaluate the content validity of the instruments in order to guarantee the accuracy and dependability of the data that was going to be gathered from the field. For the purpose of determining the content validity of the instruments, we went through each item one at a time and compared their respective contents to check and see whether they had all of the information that was required to meet the aims of the research and account for all of its variables. The university supervisor was asked for their expert opinions on the matter. The head of the department gave the research instruments a thorough review in order to determine whether or not the

material was suitable for the instruments, as well as whether or not any adjustments were necessary in order to accomplish the aims of the study. Before the actual research could begin, the received input was afterward included in the instruments that were used. Validity analysis was performed on both of the study instruments.

3.10 Data Analysis

After collecting the questionnaires and interview schedules, the researcher examined each one to make sure it was complete. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v25) was used to perform the tasks of coding, processing, and tabulating the results from the instruments. Utilizing descriptive statistics, an analysis of the gathered data was carried out. The percentages and frequency distributions were utilized as descriptive statistics. Tables of frequency distribution, percentages, and frequency counts were used in the process of quantitative data analysis. In particular, we used frequency tables in conjunction with percentages. At long last, the information was laid out for the audience in the form of tables, graphs, and charts.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the results and discussion of the findings on the influence of communication strategies on public participation in Makueni County, Kenya. Mainly the study focused on the influence of audience representation, communication content control, and communication feedback mechanisms on public participation in the county development agenda.

4.2 Response Rate

The result of table 4.1 below indicates the response rate as obtained from the total number of valid responses obtained from interviews and group discussions conducted and questionnaires administered, filled, and returned. A total of one hundred (100) respondents were sampled; ten (10) key informant interviews, four (4) executive county officials (Directors), six (6) ward development officers, and ninety (90) questionnaires were administered to community members.

Table 4.1: Sampling Matrix

Respondent	Sampled (n) Size	Returned	Return Rate (%)
Top Management	4	2	50.00
Ward Development Officers	6	5	83.33
Community Members	90	79	87.78
Total	100	86	86

Source: Author (2022)

Based on the findings as summarized in table 4.1, a total of eighty-six (86) usable responses were obtained; seven (7) key informant interviews were conducted (two (2) executive county officials (Director Planning and Director Budgeting), and five (5) ward development officers) while seventy-nine (79) questionnaires were filled and returned by the sampled community members.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

Based on the data collected the following demographic characteristics; gender, age, marital status, education level, and occupation of the sampled respondents were collected and summarized as shown in table 4.2 below, where N=79.

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of the Community Members

Demographics	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45	57.0
	Female	34	43.0
	Total	79	100
Age	18 to 24	10	12.7
	25 to 35	16	20.3
	36 to 45	18	22.8
	46 to 55	26	32.9
	Above 55	9	11.3
	Total	79	100
Marital Status	Married	54	68.4
	Single	20	25.2
	Divorced	1	1.3
	Widowed	4	5.1
	Total	79	100
Occupation	Self-employed (Business)	33	41.8
	Employed (Formal)	13	16.5
	Farmer	5	6.3
	Self-employed (Juakali)	15	19.0
	Student	6	7.6
	Not Employed	7	8.9
	Total	79	100
Education Level	No formal education	6	7.6
	Primary	10	12.7
	Secondary	29	36.7
	College	23	29.1
	University	11	13.9
	Total	79	100

Source: Survey Data (2022)

According to the responses obtained from the respondents, a majority (57%) were male while the remaining 43% were female. These findings implied that participation in the study was gender balanced and that public participation in the county development agenda program considers gender equality. Based on the statistics

obtained from key informant interviews with ward development officers it was observed that out of the five two (40%) were male while three (60%) were female, this demonstrates good inclusion of women in the county government matters.

According to the statistics obtained in this study, the majority (32.9%) of the respondents were aged 46 to 55 years, some (22.8%) were aged 36 to 45 years, another 20.3% were aged 25 to 35 years while 12.7% were aged 18 to 24 years and only 11.3% were aged above 55 years. The majority (68.4%) of the respondents were married, some (25.2%) were single, a few (5.1%) were widowed, and very few (1.3%) were divorced.

Regarding the occupation of the respondents it was observed that the majority (41.8%) were self-employed (Business) some (19%) were self-employed (Juakali) while 16.5% stated that they were in formal employment while 7.6% were students and the remaining 6.3% were farmers. These statistics indicate that all community members across different occupations were well represented in the study.

The community members were asked to state their highest attained education levels, and it was revealed that the majority (36.7%) attended secondary school educations, some (29.1%) attended college and technical training institutions another 13.9% had university education while 12.7% were primary school dropouts and only 7.6% stated that they had no formal education.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

This section covers the descriptive analysis of data obtained in line with the study's specific objectives.

4.4.1 Awareness of Public participation in County Development Agenda

The respondents were asked to state if they were aware of public participation in the county development agenda. The results were summarized as shown in figure 4.1 below, where N=79.

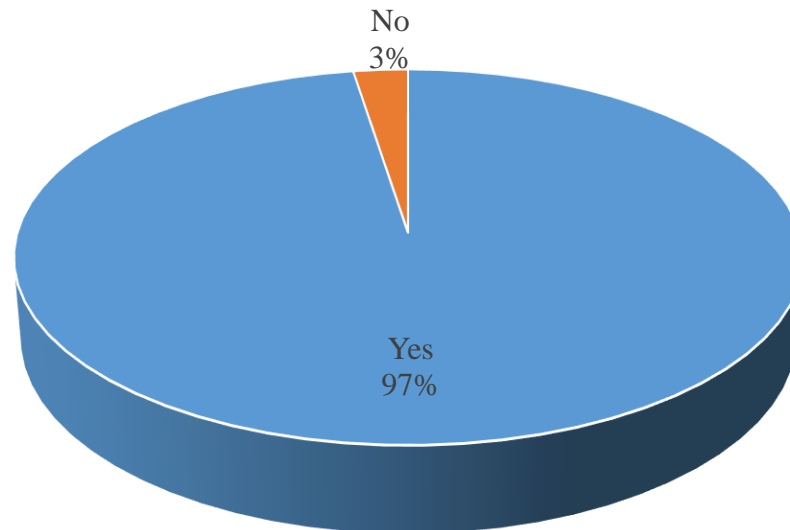


Figure 4.1: Public Participation Program Awareness

Source: Survey Data (2022)

According to the study findings, it was revealed that the majority (97%) of the respondents stated that they were aware of the public participation in the county development agenda while only 3% stated that they were not aware. However, they state that they are aware of the meeting but did not understand the purpose of the meetings. This was attributed to the fact that a small proportion of the community members had no formal education, had no access to information resulting from staying in rural areas, and therefore it was difficult for them to comprehend the purpose of public participation in the county development agenda.

Table 4.3: Mode of Public Participation Information Sharing

Mode	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Radio	37	46.8
Newspapers	1	1.3
Face-to-Face Communication	36	45.6
Short Message Service (SMS)	5	6.3
Total	79	100.0

Source: Author (2022)

The community members were asked to state how they received information about public participation in the county development agenda. According to a majority (46.8%), local radio stations were a popular means of passing information. Another 45.6% of the respondents stated that they received this information face-to-face from ward development officers, community opinion leaders, village elders, chiefs, clan elders, church leaders, and community members. A proportion (6.3%) of those who had mobile phones and had registered for updates stated with they received Short Message Service (SMS) notifications about the schedules for public participation and shared the information with other community members by word of mouth. A small proportion (1.3%) who had access to newspapers stated that they read it in the newspapers but stated that this was not a common mode of communication by the county regarding public participation in the county development agenda.

According to the interviews conducted with the ward development officers, they stated they played an integral role in informing the community on matters regarding public participation and creating awareness of the role of the community in the oversight of the county development projects. They further stated that the county prepared flyers and posters and conducted public awareness campaigns (roadshows with public address systems). “We work together in planning and mobilizing

resources to facilitate public participation.” Said one of the Ward Development Officers.

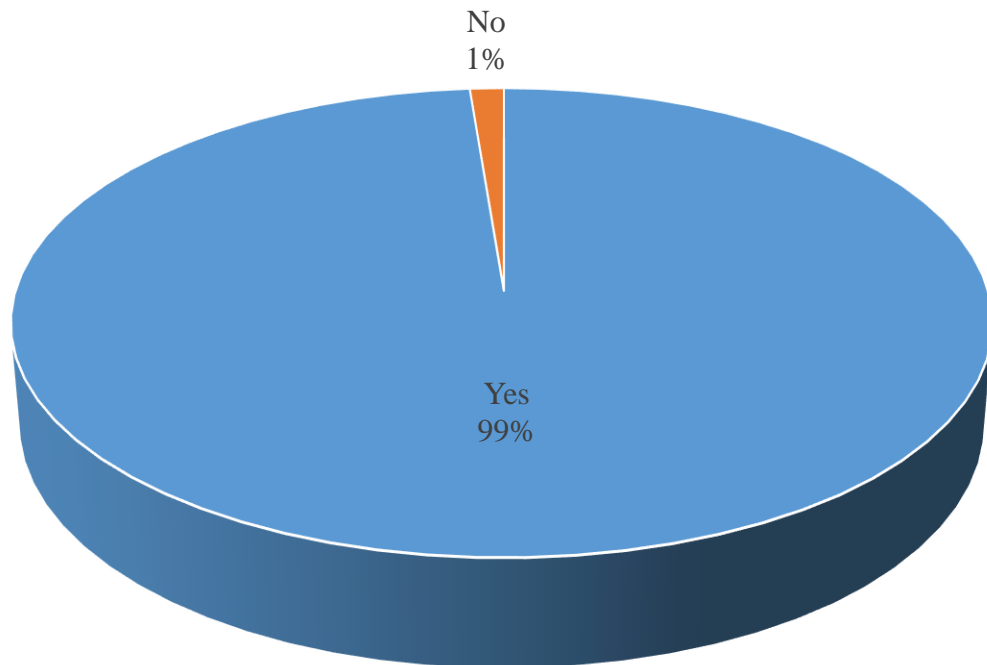


Figure 4.2: Public Encouragement to Participate in the Development Agenda

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The respondents were asked to state if the county government encouraged the public to participate in the county development agenda. Based on the responses obtained, a majority (99%) stated that the county government encouraged the public to participate in the development agenda and that the county invested in public awareness of its role in the county development agenda. A very small proportion (1%) was noted to have stated “no”, and this might have been a result of a lack of access to information and illiteracy as noted earlier.

Table 4.4: Public Participation Attendance

Mode	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Yes	78	98.7
No	1	1.3
Total	79	100.0

Source: Author (2022)

The respondents were asked to state if they have ever attended public participation forums and 98.7% stated they have participated and that they always participate when called upon. The remaining 1.3% who cited “no” said that they have not attended due to old age and illness. This response rate indicates that the community has been educated on their responsibilities in development programs by the county.

Table 4.5: Participant Opinion Consideration during Public Participation

Mode	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Yes	77	97.5
No	2	2.5
Total	79	100.0

Source: Author (2022)

It was also necessary to seek from the respondents whether their opinion was sought in the meeting that they had previously attended and according to a majority (97.5%), the opinion of the people has always been sought regarding county development projects while those who said “no” stated that they do not feel that their opinion was taken into consideration. According to the interview with the executive officers, public participation is the order of the day and no development can be done within the county without involving the community. “We engage the public on every project that we seek to implement as a matter of policy, without which such a project would never be sanctioned by the Executive or even the County Assembly.” Said one of the respondent executive officers.

Table 4.6: County government sufficiently created awareness

Mode	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Yes	74	93.7
No	5	6.3
Total	79	100.0

Source: Author (2022)

According to the views of the respondents on whether the county government sufficiently created awareness of the need to participate in the County Development Agenda, the responses obtained indicated that the majority (74%) agreed (yes) the county has created awareness of public participation in the county development agenda. However, a good number (6.3%) stated that there is a need for the county government to do more regarding creating awareness of public participation. This group of respondents further stated that the county government ought to ensure that information is disseminated to all parts of the county including those that are accessible and that there is a need to conduct regular civic education programmes in the rural areas.

4.4.2 Influence of Audience representation on Public Participation

To ascertain the impact of communication techniques on public involvement, the respondents were asked to express how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements on audience representation that were included in the study questionnaire. Following the study, the statistics listed in table 4.7 below, where N=79, were obtained.

Table 4.7: Audience representation

Audience representation	1		2		3		4		5		\bar{x}	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
The county administration has adopted mechanisms and policies that involve all citizens in participation in the county development agenda	9	11.4	70	88.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.89	.320
There are detailed procedures to be followed to participate in the county development agenda	5	6.3	12	15.2	61	77.2	1	1.3	0	0	2.73	.593
It is easy to participate in the county development agenda	69	87.3	10	12.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.78	.795
Aggregate Score											2.413	0.589

Key: 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree, SD – Standard Deviation, \bar{x} - Mean

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The opinion of the respondents regarding audience representation was sought and the responses obtained were summarized as shown in table 4.8. According to the county officials in charge of public participation, there is nothing like audience representation. However public participation is organized thematically targeting specific groups in the community such as persons with disabilities (PWDs), the youth, the business community, children, women, and People Living with HIV (PLHIV) among others. “These thematic clusters are meant to obtain as much relevant information from the community members as possible based on the challenges they experience as opposed to how informed or knowledgeable in the project we are proposing.” Said one of the respondent county officials in charge of public participation.

According to the responses obtained, it was further revealed that the county administration has adopted mechanisms and policies that involve all citizens in participation in the county development agenda as cited by a majority (88.6%) who agreed with the statement while the remaining 11.4% strongly agreed with the statement as supported by a mean of 1.89 and standard deviation of 0.320.

According to the responses obtained from the sampled respondents, a majority (77.2%) were not sure if there are detailed procedures to be followed to participate in the county development agenda. Some (15.2%) agreed while 6.3% strongly agreed with the statement and only 1.3% disagreed with the statement as supported by a mean of 2.73 and a standard deviation of 0.593. This response may be attributed to the fact that not many of the community members understand how the county government works in planning and conducting successful public participation. However, according to an interview with the ward development officers, the county government follows specific procedures while planning and conducting public participation. This helps minimize redundancy of the programs and the information shared hence cost efficiency.

According to the respondents, a majority (87.3%) and another 12.7% strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the statement that it is easy to participate in the county development agenda as supported by a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.795. This can be attributed to the fact that the county government of Makueni is dedicated to promoting government by the people for the people and has set aside resources for civic education and communication to and from the people of Makueni County.

4.4.3 Influence of Communication Content Control on Public Participation

To ascertain the impact of communication techniques on public involvement, the respondents were asked to assess how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements on communication content control that were included in the study questionnaire. The following statistics, where N=79, were produced based on the analysis. They are presented in table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Communication Content Control

Communication content control	1		2		3		4		5		\bar{x}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Controlled content flow during public meetings enhances public participation	69	87.3	10	12.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.13	.335
Content flow during public meetings is well organized to enhance public participation	39	49.4	21	26.6	19	24.1	0	0	0	0	1.75	.824
The information dissemination mechanisms during the public meeting are well structured to enhance public participation	6	7.6	38	48.1	11	13.9	24	30.4	0	0	2.67	.996
Lack of information on the constitutional acts hinders your public participation in the county development agenda	5	6.3	5	6.3	8	10.1	34	43.0	27	34.2	3.92	1.130
Lack of adequate communication hinders your participation in the county development agenda	10	12.7	4	5.1	7	8.9	17	21.5	41	51.9	3.95	1.404
Aggregate Score											2.684	0.938

Key: 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree, SD – Standard Deviation, \bar{x} - Mean

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The opinion of the respondents regarding the communication content control was sought and the responses obtained were summarized as shown in table 4.8. A majority (87.3%) and another 12.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that there is controlled content flow during public meetings which enhances public participation. This is done to avoid content distortion of information and ensure that the shared information is well understood by the target audience.

The majority of the respondents (49.3%) and some (26.6%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively while the remaining 24.1% were not sure whether content flow during public meetings is well organized to enhance public participation as supported by a mean of 1.75 and standard deviation of 0.824. According to the Kathonzwani Civic Education Coordinator (CEC), communication is two-way from the communities to the government and from the government to the communities. Consequently, the county government has put in place strategies for enhancing content flow to and from the county office and the community. This mechanism includes the use of ward development officers, opinion leaders, clan elders, church leaders, chiefs, media (notices, posters, print media, provincial administration, radio stations, brochures and flyers, and public address system), and feedback to ensure that the information passed served its intended purpose. The county government also considers people from communities within Makueni county living outside the county and those in the diaspora where arranged meetings are mainly for seeking their opinion and sending feedback on the county development projects. According to a response from an interview with one of the county development officers, the content of the information aired out is kept clear to the goal to encourage more people to

participate in the set program. “We try as much as possible to keep the message simple and friendly so that the public can come forward and offer their views.’ He said.

A majority (48.1%) of the respondents agreed that information dissemination mechanisms during the public meeting are well structured to enhance public participation. On the other hand, a good number (30.4%) disagreed with the statement while a few (13.9%) were not sure and only 7.6% strongly agreed with the statement as supported by a mean of 2.67 and a standard deviation of 0.996. according to an interview with the county planning director, the committee at the county level has a great role to play towards public participation by planning and mobilizing resources, materials, and responsible personnel for communication to and from the community as well as mobilizing the communities on the importance of public participation. This structured communication between the county government and the people ensures they deliver the same message to avoid misunderstanding.

Lack of information on the constitutional provisions hinders public participation in the county development agenda however according to the responses obtained majority (43%) and another 34.2% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement saying that the county government has done quite commendable work in educating the public on the importance of participating in the county development agenda. A few (10.1%) were not sure while the remaining 6.3% equally agreed and strongly agreed with the statement as supported by a mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 1.130. According to an interview with the Kathonziwani civic education director, the county government of Makueni is committed to educating the public on their constitutional roles in the development agenda.

The findings revealed that there is adequate communication for public participation as cited by a majority (51.9) who strongly disagreed and some (21.5%) who disagreed with the statement that “lack of adequate communication hinders your participation in the county development agenda”. A few (8.9%) were not sure while the remaining 12.7% and 5.1% strongly agreed and agreed respectively as supported by a mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.404.

4.4.4 Influence of Communication Feedback Mechanisms on Public Participation

To ascertain the impact of communication techniques on public engagement, the respondents were asked to express how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements on communication feedback mechanisms that were included in the study questionnaire. The following statistics, where N=79, were produced based on the analysis. They are presented in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Communication feedback mechanisms

Communication feedback mechanisms	1		2		3		4		5		\bar{x}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
The communication feedback mechanisms in place are effective	35	44.3	44	55.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.56	.500
The county conducts a feedback activity after every successful public participation meeting	9	11.4	38	48.1	32	40.5	0	0	0	0	2.29	.663
The available communication feedback mechanisms are adequate to enhance public participation	4	5.1	40	50.6	33	41.8	2	2.5	0	0	2.42	.633
Aggregate Score											2.09	0.599

Key: 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree, SD – Standard Deviation, \bar{x} - Mean

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Based on the findings of this study the majority (55.7% and 44.3%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the statement that the communication feedback mechanisms in place were effective. Further to the findings, a majority (48.1%) of the respondents agreed that the county government conducts a feedback activity after every successful public participation meeting. Some respondents (40.5%) were not sure, while a small number (11.4%) strongly agreed with this statement as supported by a mean of 2.29 and a standard deviation of 0.663. It was also clear as cited with a majority (50.6%) agreeing while a small number (5.1%) strongly agreed that the available communication feedback mechanisms are adequate to enhance public participation. Some (41.8%) were not sure while only 2.5% disagreed with the statement as supported by a mean of 2.42 and a standard deviation of 0.633.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the study, draws conclusions based on the findings, and makes recommendations concerning the influence of communication strategies on public participation in Makueni County, Kenya.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of communication strategies on public participation in Makueni County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to assess the influence of audience representation, communication content control, and communication feedback mechanisms on public participation in the county development agenda.

The County of Makueni has in place the administration officers who are in charge of the county. Their main roles include; involving citizens in County development planning, informing citizens about development issues in each sub-county, educating community roles of County government, and engaging citizens in planning, budgeting, and implementation and sustaining of projects in the County. They also offer civic education to the community such as county development agenda (development projects) and health (Covid-19 prevention and control measures) among others. They also assist in delivering information such as public safety and coordinating the different ward-based development officers as well village development committees. They also mobilize people to attend public activities and participate.

Makueni County is made up of 968 villages where public participation is highly encouraged. Due to the high number of people, each village has got its representatives. A group of villages with a maximum number of 15 villages is grouped to form a cluster and they choose a committee of 12 members with a representation of all groups. The 12 members from the cluster meet with different clusters where they converge and come up with a group of 12 members at the sub-ward level. From the sub-ward, the 12 members from different sub-wards meet to make another group of 12 members at the ward level. The different ward committee members meet and form the sub-County Committee of 12 members. The elected 12 sub-County members meet with different sub County committees to make a group of 12 at the County level.

Communication for public participation in Makueni County is two-way i.e. from the communities to the government and from the government to the communities. Hence, the main modes of reaching the targeted population are through planned meetings for people in the diaspora and outside Makueni County, notices, posters, print media, provincial administration, radio stations, brochures and flyers, and a public address system for people living within the county. Hence, the content of the information aired out is kept clear to encourage more people to attend. To avoid content distortion the County has in place a clear work structure on who handles such information, how it will reach the target population, and where and when it will be aired out.

The committee at the County level has a great role to play in public participation hence they have to sensitize the communities on the importance of public participation. It also ensures they deliver the same message to avoid misunderstanding, hence they have content control. Feedback is paramount whenever there is communication. Thus, the County has in place a follow-up mechanism from the village, cluster, sub-ward,

ward, and Sub-County up to the County level. Feedback mechanisms are also a two-way model, bottom-up and top to bottom. Feedback thus flows from the Community to the government and from the government to the community. This gives the government a popular characterization thus “People’s Government of Makueni County”. The feedback mechanism also includes development committees, representatives, emails and replies, and the use of bulk SMS communication on the venue and activities.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

Like any public institution, the County Government of Makueni has its fair share of challenges. They include; limited resources to undertake public participation, a shortage of technical staff to guide and convene public participation forums, competing political interests, especially by members of the county assembly, and conflict of interest. It was cited that some of the top management usurp powers by bypassing ward development officers and directly undertaking duties set for ward development officers. The department for public participation is set to work in synergy with ward development officers, however, differences and conflicts occur due to facilitation allowances involved during the process of promoting public participation programs.

At times, there is little and sometimes no facilitation and allowances for public participation programs which makes it difficult for the involved promoters (such as ward development officers) to carry out their duties. Citizens attending public participation programs sometimes feel that they are exploited or even the meeting are not necessary or important to them as the majority of them lack allowances. In many instances, participants come from remote areas and require facilitation in terms of

transport and food which the county government does not always provide. This creates an impression that the ward development officers and other county officers have teamed up and pocketed money meant to facilitate public participation in development. Differences among workers were also noted to be among the top challenge while promoting public participation. Sometimes workers conflict over roles that are not well stipulated by the relevant county department

It was also noted that political interests among members of county assembly (MCAs) involving the development project hinders the effectiveness and efficiency of carrying out the public participation process. On the other hand, the personal interests of those in the government and civilians are also a challenge to the progress of public participation programs.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

The following recommendations were formulated as a consequence of the findings of the research as follows:

5.4.1 County Government of Makueni

- i. There is a need for the county government to carry out proper citizen capacity building to enhance citizen understanding of their role in development.
- ii. There is a need to continuously enhance and strengthen public participation through proper facilitation of field events and providing necessary resources to ward development officers for promoting public participation in development.
- iii. There is a need for the offices in charge of public participation to continuously monitor communication to ensure that it is always guided and

timely and that technical knowledge on all projects is timely and properly shared among the people. Further, civic education on related projects should be timely and properly conducted to ensure that citizens acquaint themselves with relevant technical knowledge before the county government conducts public participation to seek the opinion of citizens.

- iv. There is a need to encourage the citizens to actively participate in development through the provision of allowance (food and transport) and other forms of incentives to facilitate the meetings.

5.4.2 County Assembly of Makueni

- i. The study found that the county government of Makueni has done considerably well in terms of enhancing public participation. However, there are concerns from the public in terms of the resources allocated for the facilitation of public participation meetings. Thus, the County Assembly should consider and approve adequate budgetary allocation for facilitating public participation forums.

5.4.3 County Governments

- i. There is a need to enhance, strengthen and increase communication channels and structures to allow every member of the society to acquire information regarding county public participation programmes and contribute to the county development particularly to those community members living in remote areas with no proper infrastructure for communication and travel to attend public participation meetings.
- ii. County governments should not ignore the impact of public participation on the county development agenda on the greater perspective of service

delivery instead should engage stakeholders from the initial stage of communication, the process of public participation in the development agenda, and service delivery. Successful stakeholder engagement improves service delivery as it informs the county planning and budgeting departments.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Study

This study explored original information regarding the influence of communication strategies on public participation in Makueni County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to assess the influence of audience representation, communication content control, and communication feedback mechanisms on public participation in the county development agenda. Despite this, the information that has been uncovered does not cover everything because of the dynamic changes that are occurring in county governments and the political climate at the county level. The ensuing recommendations for further study have been made with this perspective in mind.

This study assessed communication strategies in Makueni County, the findings may not be sufficient for generalizing the influence of communication strategies on public participation. As a result, it is advised that more research with a broader scope be carried out in order to discover and establish the degree to which communication techniques impact public engagement among Kenya's county governments.

There is a need for further study to investigate any of the critical capacity-building needs and appropriate financing instruments for communication in public participation from the initial stage of planning to execution and feedback.

In the present investigation, a descriptive research methodology was used so that the researchers could evaluate the impact that communication tactics have on public engagement and come to a conclusion. On the other hand, a descriptive research approach looks at events in the contexts in which they occur naturally and does not manipulate the data in any way. As a result, the findings of this study suggest that more research should be conducted using an experimental research design in which the variables may be carefully changed and assessed to determine the exact impact that communication tactics have on public engagement.

Individual county governments play a major role in their success (success of public participation in development). This is because, despite the use of similar laws and regulations as provided by the constitution of Kenya, individual county governments perform better than others given the same resources and opportunities. Therefore, there is a need for further study to assess the role played by individual county governments in the success of public participation in development.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Daniel Waitere,

P.O Box 53884-00200, Nairobi, Kenya.

5th September 2022

Dear Madam/ Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

My name is Daniel Waitere, a Masters's Student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a study entitled “Influence of Communication Strategies on Public Participation in Makueni County, Kenya”. You have been selected to participate in the data collection exercise. The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. Your personal information will not be shared with any third parties. You are free to join or decline to participate in this exercise.

Thank you.

Daniel Waitere,

Student Researcher.

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Community Members

My name is Daniel Waitere, a Master's Student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a study on the *“Influence of Communication Strategies on Public Participation in Makeni County, Kenya”*. You have been selected to participate in the data collection exercise. The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. Your personal information will not be shared with any third parties. *Please fill in the blank space and tick where applicable.*

Section A: Demographic Data

1. What is your Gender?
Male Female
2. What is your age?
Less than 25 26 - 35 36 - 45 46 – 55
] Above 55
3. What is your marital status?
Married Single Divorced Widowed
4. What is your occupation?
Employed (Formal) Employed (Business)
Farmer
Self-employed (Jua Kali) Other (specify)
.....
.....
5. What is your highest level of education?
No formal education Primary
Secondary
College University
6. Have you heard about public participation in the county development agenda?
Yes No
7. If YES, how did you (how do you) get information about the program?
Radio Television
[]
Email Newspaper
[]
Face-to-Face Communication Short Message Service (SMS)
Other (Specify)
.....
.....
8. Does the County Government encourage the public to participate in the development agenda?
Yes No

Please Explain your answer

.....

9. Have you ever attended the county development agenda program?

Yes No

Please Explain your answer

.....

10. If YES, was your opinion sought during the meeting?

Yes No

11. In your opinion do you think the Makueni County government sufficiently created awareness of the need to participate in the County Development Agenda?

Yes No

Please Explain your answer

.....

12. If NO what should the County government have done to create sufficient awareness

.....

Section B: Audience representation and public participation in the County Development Agenda

13. On a scale of 1 – 5, how do you agree with the following statements?

Key: 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree

Audience representation	1	2	3	4	5
The audience representation process is well-planned and it is efficient					
The county administration has adopted mechanisms and policies that involve all citizens in participation in the county development agenda					
There are detailed procedures to be followed to participate in the county development agenda					
It is easy to participate in the county development agenda					

14. In your opinion what can be done in terms of audience representation to enhance public participation?

.....

Section C: Communication content control and public participation in the County Development Agenda

15. On a scale of 1 – 5, how do you agree with the following statements?

Key: 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree

Communication content control	1	2	3	4	5
Controlled content flow during public meetings enhances public participation					
Content flow during public meetings is well organized to enhance public participation					
The information dissemination mechanisms during the public meeting are well structured to enhance public participation					
Lack of information on the constitutional acts hinders your public participation in the county development agenda					
Lack of adequate communication hinders your participation in the county development agenda					

16. In your opinion what can be done in terms of communication content control to enhance public participation?

.....

Section D: Communication feedback mechanisms and public participation in the County Development Agenda

17. Are there communication feedback mechanisms available for enhancing public participation in the county development agenda?

Yes No

If “YES” what are the available feedback mechanisms?

.....

18. On a scale of 1 – 5, how do you agree with the following statements?

Key: 1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree

Communication feedback mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5
The communication feedback mechanisms in place are effective					

The county conducts a feedback activity after every successful public participation meeting					
The available communication feedback mechanisms are adequate to enhance public participation					

19. In your opinion what can be done to enhance the available feedback mechanisms?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix III: Interview Schedule for County Officials

My name is Daniel Waitere, a Master's Student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a study on the *“Influence of Communication Strategies on Public Participation in Makeni County, Kenya”*. You have been selected to participate in the data collection exercise. The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. Your personal information will not be shared with any third parties. You are free to join or decline to participate in this exercise.

Interview Questions

1. What is your position in the county government?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your highest education level?
4. How long have you served in your current position?
5. How is public participation in the county development agenda organized in the county?
6. What are the available communication strategies for public participation in the county development agenda?
7. What is your opinion on the influence of communication content control on public participation in the county development agenda?
8. Are you aware of audience representation?
9. What audience representation strategies are available in the county development agenda?
10. In your opinion what can be done in terms of audience representation to enhance public participation?

11. Are there communication feedback mechanisms available for enhancing public participation in the county development agenda?
12. What are the available feedback mechanisms in the county development agenda?
13. What is your view on the influence of communication feedback mechanisms on public participation in the county development agenda?
14. In your opinion what can be done in terms of communication content control to enhance public participation?
15. What is your view on the influence of communication feedback mechanisms on public participation in the county development agenda?
16. In your view what can be done to enhance the available feedback mechanisms?
17. Are there any factors that sometimes hinder the flow of information between the citizens and the county government?
18. What issues should be dealt with to encourage public participation in the county development agenda?
19. How can communication between citizens and the County Government be used to encourage their participation in the county development agenda?
20. What is your comment on the seriousness/importance of communication in public participation in the county development agenda?
21. Do you have any other suggestions/opinions/views you may wish to share with me on the influence of communication on public participation in the county development agenda?

Appendix IV: Focused Group Discussion with Key Informants

My name is Daniel Waitere, a Master's Student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a study on the *“Influence of Communication Strategies on Public Participation in Makeni County, Kenya”*. You have been selected to participate in the data collection exercise. The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. Your personal information will not be shared with any third parties. You are free to join or decline to participate in this exercise.

Discussion questions

1. What is your role in the county government?
2. What is your role in public participation and the county development agenda?
3. What is your highest education level?
4. How long have you served in your current position?
5. How is public participation in the county development agenda organized in the county?
6. What are the available communication strategies for public participation in the county development agenda?
7. What is your opinion on the influence of communication content control on public participation in the county development agenda?
8. What is your opinion on the influence of communication feedback mechanisms on public participation in the county development agenda?
9. What is your opinion on the influence of communication feedback mechanisms on public participation in the county development agenda?

10. Are there any factors that sometimes hinder the flow of information between the citizens and the county government?
11. What issues should be dealt with to encourage public participation in the county development agenda?
12. How can communication between citizens and you be used to encourage their participation in the county development agenda?
13. What is your opinion/comment on the seriousness/importance of communication in public participation in the county development agenda?
14. Do you have any other suggestions/opinions/views you may wish to share with me on the influence of communication on public participation in the county development agenda?

Appendix V: Proposal Approval Letter



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION**

*Telegram: Journalism Varsity Nairobi
Telephone: 254-020-491 0000, Ext. 28080, 28061
Director's Office: 254-020 4913208 Direct Line)
Email: rc@uonbi.ac.ke*

*P.O. Box 30197
Nairobi,
Kenya*

OUR REF:

YOUR REF:

DATE: August 23, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: DANIEL WAITERE WAWERU - K50/70118/2013

This is to confirm that the above named is a bonafide student at the University of Nairobi, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication pursuing Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies.

Mr. Waweru has completed his course work and is currently going to collect data for his research project leading to a Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies.

Any assistance accorded to him will be highly appreciated.



Wendy Cherono
Senior Administrative Assistant
Department of Journalism & Mass Communication

Appendix VII: Letter of Introduction to Makueni County

DANIEL WAITERE

P. O. BOX 53884-00200, NAIROBI.

Tel: 0713718561

5th September 2022

To:
The Secretary,
County Government of Makueni.



Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH WITHIN THE COUNTY.

My name is **Daniel Waitere**, a master's Student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a study on the "*Influence of Communication Strategies on Public Participation in Makueni County, Kenya*".

I am requesting for authorization to conduct a study within the county. The information gathered during the study will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

Yours faithfully,

Daniel Waitere

Approved
B. C. S.
05/09/2022

Appendix VIII: Makueni County Research Authorization

IREPUBLIC OF KENYA



GOVERNMENT OF MAKUENI COUNTY



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY SECRETARY
P.O. Box 78-90300 - MAKUENI Tel No.: 020-2034944
Email: county.secretary@makueni.go.ke, contact@makueni.go.ke
web: www.makueni.go.ke

Ref: Ref: ADM/12/VII/(137)

Date: 5th September, 2022

Daniel Waitere,
P.O. box 53884-00200,
NAIROBI.

Subject: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

We acknowledge receipt of research licence No. NACOSTI/P/22/20028 dated 31st August, 2022 from Director General National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation licensing you to carry out a research on 'Influence of communication Strategies on Public Participation in Makueni County, Kenya for the period ending 31st August, 2023.

The purpose of this communication is to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out the research in Makueni County Government as per your request.

Rael M. Muthoka
Ag. County Secretary
**HEAD OF THE COUNTY PUBLIC SERVICE &
SECRETARY TO THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

c.c.

- (i) CECM – Devolution, County Administration, Public Service & Youth
- (ii) Ag. Chief Officer – Devolution, County Administration, Public Service & Youth