

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT AND
SUSTAINABILITY OF ECOTOURISM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN
MERU COUNTY, KENYA**


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**A Research Project report Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Project Planning and Management, University of
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DECLARATION

This project report is my own original work and has not been presented for any award in any other university.

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This research project report is presented for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this proposal to my beloved mum Avuligasi and my siblings Audry Mukhonji, Enid Papa and Mildred Imbuhila for their relentless love and support.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBPs: Community Based Programs

GOK: Government of Kenya

TOC: Theory of Constraints

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

M & E: Monitoring and Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Discussion on the sustainability of development projects is a never-ending phenomenon, attracting attention from policy maker, decision makers, project management practitioners, academicians and even those who benefit from sustainable projects. Nevertheless, sustainability drivers are yet to be affirmed with a lot of research focusing on this subject. Looked at from the broader perspective, sustainability has taken a metamorphosis over time. The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of community participation in project cycle management and sustainability of eco-tourism enterprise development projects in Meru County, Kenya.

The following goals served as a guide for the study: To determine the impact of community involvement in project implementation on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya, to evaluate the impact of community involvement in project planning on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya, and to establish the impact of community participation in project initiation on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya and to investigate the community participation in monitoring and evaluation on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya. The target population was based on project beneficiaries who are organized in User groups. There were 294 members from 6 user groups. Membership was spread across the project area and included men and women. In addition to this, Board members, tour guides, the management and community project contact people were targeted. Data collected from respondents were sorted, cleaned, and coded appropriately to allow data entry and analysis. Clean data was entered to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) software that was used to generate data outputs for interpretation presentation and discussions. The SPSS was used for data analyses and outputs such as Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentages, and Frequencies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The topic of the feasibility of development projects is continuously discussed, drawing interest from various groups including policy makers, decision makers, project management professionals, academics, and project beneficiaries. However, the drivers of sustainability have not yet been fully established, and much of the research in this area is still ongoing. Looked at from the broader perspective, sustainability has taken a metamorphosis over time. Sustainability has traditionally been a key consideration in project operations, with a focus on financial, social, and environmental sustainability. However, there has been a recent shift in perspective towards sustainable business operations that has impacted scholars and the corporate community's approach to project management (Chawla et al., 2018). Today, sustainability is integrated into business operations, and the sustainable use of natural and environmental resources is seen as crucial for achieving overall sustainability. This has influenced how project management activities are planned, scheduled, and executed.

The achievement of the 2030 development agenda and the 17 sustainable development goals requires a global emphasis on project sustainability. According to Huimin et al. (2019), sustainability is a critical consideration in all projects, and the development of a model for evaluating project sustainability based on sustainability indicators is essential to promote sustainable development. Such sentiments are in line with Ruiz, et al. (2019) who opined that sustainability must be well understood, and indicators clearly outlined so that measurement can be useful. Project sustainability can be explained as the goal of creating and successfully launching a project, to be able to provide the expected services currently without compromising its ability to deliver the same in future. Scholars are placing greater emphasis on integrating sustainability principles into project management, with the goal of conserving natural resources while also creating positive impacts on society and the economy (López, 2021). Nevertheless, definition of sustainability seems counter objective in the sense that project management is concerned with short term economic profitability. As stated by Hundal (2012), mismanagement of wildlife conservation through a long period of time has led to forests being degraded as well as coastlines

being eroded with devastating results in India, despite the country having a rich biodiversity. As a result of these, 127 species of animals have been considered to be at risk globally. No animal has ever lived to infinity; neither has any animal existed without evolving differently or dying completely, making extinction to be termed as a biological reality. According to Yamin & Sim, 2016, smaller animals like rodents and bats face the threat of becoming extinct as opposed to other animal species.

Sustainability of development projects in Africa remain a mirage given the underlying issues specific to the continent. Kolo (2019) says that the natural environment defining Africa and the richness in resources above and below the ground brings about higher prospect of sustainability but at the same time poses the danger of depletion and a tragedy. This means that the way these resources are utilized through implementation of sustainable projects matter in this process. Kadyan, 2017 says that the environment has always been an important part of Africans glory, and its downfalls. However, if managed well, we are promised of a sustainable future.

This concept of eco-tourism was introduced into the academia in early 1980s and since then it has become so grounded into academia and practice and has also featured heavily in policy. Several authors, including Burns (2005), Fung and Wong (2007), Moran-Cahusac (2009), and Sangpikul (2010), define ecotourism as travel to nature-based destinations to learn about and experience natural resources, landscapes, flora and fauna, and their habitats, while also appreciating the culture and socio-economic needs of nearby communities. These definitions incorporate both ecological and non-ecological aspects of ecotourism. However, according to Chireshe and Plattner (2010), many people in developing countries, including citizens of South Africa, are impoverished, despite their countries having scenic natural resources that could be used for ecotourism. More so, ecotourism has become a catchphrase, gaining popularity locally, regionally and internationally as a model for sustainable development, consequently, there is increased demand for data and information on the drivers of sustainable ecotourism. From literature, sustainable ecotourism can be achieved not through policy and legislative framework alone but largely through design and implementation of sustainable projects. However, Carter, Durham, Driscoll & Honey, (2015) indicates that despite the importance of eco-tourism in social-economic sphere, its advancement and associated activities come with adverse negative effects to local communities. To mitigate this problem, Mao & Zhang, (2018) advocates for implementation of sustainable projects that well

thought to mitigate these adverse effects, employing conservation ethic and appropriate resource use and allocation. The primary objective I ecotourism should be maintain a healthy environment with regard to its fisheries, habitats, and biological diversity. McComb, (2015) singles out Russia and Zimbabwe where ecotourism has been given priority despite the many challenges facing its implementation

According to his research in Namibia, Young, 2012 found out that there was an increasing cross-scale and cross level linkages with international tourism enterprises among conservancies, regionally. In South Africa, National parks were buttressed into reserves in order to try and preserve wildlife for economic benefits in place of agriculture in the semi-arid areas. This emerged in the 1980s, to conform with the international approaches to community-based conservation. Fabricius, *et al.*2012 call this method as community-based natural resource management.

Locally, Kenya's Vision 2030, aims at attaining an equitable social development under a secure sustainable and a clean environment. This will be attained by increasing the canopy cover of forests from below 3% to 4% and to reduce human illnesses that are related to the environment. This will be achieved by supporting and promoting the conservation of the environment under the economic pillar (Wanjiku, 2013). Kenya has also seen county governments putting in place measures to help curb environmental degradation and enhance conservation by restoring the five water reservoirs to manage catchment areas and recovering the wildlife corridors and migration paths routes. Forest degradation has been known to the Kenyan forests. This has led to states and national government intervening due to the increased awareness on conservation, globally. Other states and the Kenyan government have been forced to incorporate environmental conservation policies and legislations in their national agendas, (Liambila, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Collective ecotourism is seen as the panacea to ecosystem conservation, revenues generation and community development. It is considered to be the means to income generating project development and likewise a route to sustainability. Proponents of this concept pride it for advancing the local communities' social economic status while conserving the environment and enhancing its sustainability. Nevertheless, its sustainability cannot be assured as many ecotourism enterprises projects have failed to deliver the expected results (Zhang & Lei, 2012). For Kenya,

this reality downs negatively to communities hosting such ecotourism resources and who invest a lot of resources in the development of such projects and in most cases the communities are left worse off while investors reap the benefits GOK, (2018) shows that even though there are a lot of benefits accruing from ecotourism activities, utilization of tourism resources has been unsustainable.

Various studies have investigated different aspects of sustainability in community-based ecotourism (CBET). For instance, Githinji (2009) examined factors that affect CBET sustainability in Mutomo District of Kitui County, Wilder (2016) assessed ecotourism as a tool for sustainable forest management in Adaba-Dodola, Ethiopia, Ekwale (2014) studied the involvement of local communities in CBET planning and development in Takamanda National Park, Southwest Region, Cameroon, Jepchirchir (2016) assessed local community attitudes toward ecotourism in Laikipia County, while Gaitho (2014) examined the impact of CBET on household livelihoods and environmental management in IINgwesi and Lekurruki Group Ranches in Laikipia County.

While previous studies have been conducted, the researchers were unable to identify the factors that contribute to the viability of community-based ecotourism projects, leaving a gap that this case study seeks to fill. The study focuses on the Northern Rangeland Trust Conservancy in Meru County, Kenya, and aims to identify the factors that promote sustainability in community-based ecotourism development projects. Some scholars, such as Silvius et al. (2014, 2017) and Gareis et al. (2013), have attempted to merge sustainability and project management. The literature suggests various opportunities for developing models, tools, methods, and techniques to measure and integrate sustainability and project management, as highlighted in studies by Singh et al. (2012), Thomson et al. (2011), and John et al. (2016). However, despite extensive research in this area, a gap still exists in understanding the link between community participation and sustainability in community-based ecotourism projects. This study aims to investigate the impact of community participation on the sustainability of the Ngare Ndare Ecotourism Business in Meru County.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study aimed to determine how community participation in beneficiary needs analysis affects the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the impact of community involvement in project initiation on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.
2. To assess the influence of community participation in project planning on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.
3. To establish the influence of community participation in implementation on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.
4. To investigate the influence of community participation in monitoring and evaluation on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.

1.5 Research questions

1. To what extent did community participation in project initiation influence sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.
2. To what extent did community participation influence project planning on viability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.
3. To what extent did community involvement influence implementation on viability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.
4. To what extent did
5. community involvement in monitoring and evaluation on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.

1.6 Hypothesis

- i. To Community participation in project initiation does not have a significance influence on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.
- ii. To assess the community participation in project planning does not have a significance impact on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.
- iii. To establish the community participation in implementation does not have a significance impact on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.

- iv. To investigate the community participation in monitoring and evaluation does not have a significance influence on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.

1.7 Value of the Study

This is a contemporary subject with emerging dynamics and where research is limited. Therefore, the current study might be useful in contributing to the pool of knowledge in this area. The current research might provide some basis for future research in the same area.

The study was expected to bring out information on the community participation concept in Eco-tourism enterprise project. Studies on community participation have been widely done in other type of projects and interventions but limited in Eco-tourism. This study therefore might be useful in providing information useful to both policy makers and practitioners. Professional, experts, consultants, and investors might find this study useful in learning from the recommendations of this study as they design and implement related project. The government both National and County Government might find the study useful in informing the policies and decision they make in the development of this sector and as they develop policies guiding the sector.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two covers relevant information related to the variables of this study. The chapter also presents the theoretical framework, stakeholder theory, constraints theory, technological innovation adaptation theory conceptual framework and an outline of publications reviewed as well as a summary of gaps in knowledge.

2.2 Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Projects

Ecotourism development through various initiatives has become a buzz phrase in development and conservation arena and gaining popularity locally, regionally and internationally as a model for sustainable development. Nevertheless, sustainability of such initiatives remains a puzzle, necessitating a search for appropriate models that would guarantee sustainability. PMI (2013) postulates that questions are left unanswered as to the reason as to why many projects fail to fulfill their objectives with regards to sustainability. Carter, Durham, Driscoll & Honey, (2015) reveals that most of the ecotourism projects have not resulted to the expected results and consequently come with adverse and negative effect to the beneficiary communities not only on social – economic aspects but also on environmental repercussions. This notwithstanding, ecotourism development projects when well managed could result to long lasting impacts benefitting the current and future generations. This is the reason why Mao & Zhang, (2018) strongly suggest that sustainability of eco-tourism projects should be a major concern in design and implementation so that deployment and utilization of resources results to positive gains and coupled with conservation ethics. These findings are confirmed by Eidt, Pant, and Hickey, (2020) in their study on stakeholder's participation that projects that are designed and implemented without the inputs and contribution of project beneficiaries and stakeholders are destined to failure.

Various studies have pointed out that sustainability of development projects cannot be guaranteed especially when the project cycle is not appropriately managed. Unfortunately, there is evidence that critical drivers for sustainability are often overlooked resulting to projects failing to deliver in a sustainable manner. Ecotourism development projects fall within the category of development

projects as they are purposely implemented to contribute to community livelihood improvement and national economic development. In a study conducted by Niyi and Olorunfemi (2010) on rural water supply projects in Oyo State, Nigeria, they discovered that sustainability was hindered by technical and financial factors. This view aligns with Obar et al.'s (2017) research on sustainable projects aimed at promoting social development in Nigerian communities, which underscores the significance of involvement

Participation by project beneficiaries in projects affecting them is important to sustainability. In a study by Laah and Yusuf (2013), projects that had integrated community participation were more sustainable than those that did not encourage adequate participation. Menoka (2014) studies stakeholder participation in construction projects and found a strong relationship between stakeholder's involvement in projects and sustainability and similarly, in their study on community involvement in projects resulted to huge influence and sustainability of the projects. Mulei and Gachengo (2021) did a study on project sustainability and established a strong relationship in project cycle management is evidently crucial for improving project sustainability, and thus sustainability drivers must be tackled in all phases of project cycle management.

2.3 Community Involvement in project initiation on Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Projects

Project cycle comprise of clear phases that must be well executed for a successful delivery of a sustainable project. The initiation phase is one of the critical phase where sustainability drivers are injected through proper engagement of stakeholders including project beneficiaries and the host community. In this sense, Zorikael and Smyrk, (2012) indicates that through an elaborate project initiation phase, the justification for business investment decisions and tracking targeted results are made possible.

Project beneficiary selection is an important process in project initiation. Projects are implemented to benefit a specific category of beneficiaries who are defined based on their relevance to the project in terms of benefits and stake they have on the project. Barasa and Kikwatha (2020) did a study to establish how green technology projects perform in accordance with project design. They found that beneficiary needs account for greater proportion of project success. Project beneficiaries are the primary target whom a change in behaviors is intended and therefore success and sustainability of any development project is based on the project beneficiaries. An important aspect

of beneficiary involvement is by capacity building. This promotes the social pillar necessary for sustainability of projects (Gizaw et al., 2018). Kikwatha et al. (2017) conducted a study on beneficiary selection. The research that project beneficiary selection affects sustainability. Study noted that authentic selection and targeting of project beneficiaries promotes project ownership and this is an ingredient to project sustainability. Masole & Howie, (2013) found that project ownership and participation is as a result of how the project beneficiaries were selected. When a critical mass of the targeted population supports the project, success becomes evident and eventually its sustainability is assured.

In a study by Claiborne (2010) on the value of social capital in tourism development and community participation in Kenya, beneficiaries was low. The study pointed those beneficiaries are rarely involved in critical decision involving ecotourism initiatives. However, they only participated in the supply of goods and services and entertainment of tourists. Thus, the level of ownership of such initiatives gets compromised in the process.

2.4 Community Involvement in Project Planning on Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Projects.

Project planning phase comes after the project has been designed and focus more on planning for project components including planning for time, cost, scope and quality. Project planning makes possible for the execution of the project design as it gives the road map and processes to be followed in project implementation. According to Maunda & Makori, (2016), project planning gives an order of execution of activities to the end product by defining tasks giving time schedules, resource plan, scope and control. A study by Mueke, et al. (2021), established that quality planning is essential in ensuring that a project delivers as expected. Nicholus (2017), Gitonga (2014) contents that planing for cost and time is critical for a project to succeed and it is through appropriate planning that cost over runs and delivery delay is checked. This literature emphasis that th need for proper planng for project components.

While planning for compoents is very critical in project cycle management, the planning process must be handled in a systematic and procedural manner also taking cognisance of important variables. As such community participation becomes an important ingredient to project planning. Partipatory project planning approach has been fronted as a good approach that promotes project sustainability. It helps in planning for resources, time, resources, scope. In ecotourism projects,

communities participate in different ways such as in resource contribution, proving their ideas as inputs to planning. Zhang and Lei (2012) conducted a study and the findings indicated that communities engagement is a core element of sustainability of such projects and thus recommended that community participation should be regarded as a vital part in any “sustainable development” scheme. When communities are not adequately engaged in project planning, there is high chance of conflict arising during the project implementation. A study by Kahle & Gurel-Atay, (2013) revealed that where project beneficiaries and the host community stay at the periphery during planning, sustainability of projects gets compromised due to conflict that might arise later in the project execution stage.

Community participation approaches have become popular in advancing community development initiatives. According to Armstrong (2012), communities need to understand their stake in the project, what they are required to give and take. Such agreements cannot be brought in at a later stage if not well considered during project planning stage. Armstrong (2012) advocates for a bottom up approach to planning and execution of development programs. This approach is touted to have become popular for its benefits in project execution and viability in development , better than the top-bottom approach

2.5 Community Involvement in Implementation on Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Projects

With good planning, execution of projects becomes easy and smooth as planning is turned into actions with project managers focusing on schedule management, teams, and task executions and budget as per the developed plan. Maunda and Makori (2016) conducted a study in makueni county Kenya and saw that for a public project to be complete , 3 factors including the cost, management of quality and time were the determining factors. Smooth flow of project components do not only depend on the availability but also on the goodwill of the community and stakeholders. If communities are not adequately engaged in the implementation of the projects, it means that ownership will be low thus compromising on the performance and sustainability of the projects. Rebecca et al. (2014) found that inadequate engagement of communities in project planning and implementation resulted in project failure and a lack of sustainability.

During the implementation stage, plans are actualized and resources deployed appropriately. It is at this phase of the project cycle that communities get hand on the project, supporting in day to

day execution in different aspects such as supply of raw material, financial contributions, good will and moral support to the project teams. Hausler (2010) in a study on problems and knowledge gaps in the Concept of Ecotourism found that the level which the recipient of ecotourism projects determines the level of success the project attains. Therefore, according to Ebrahimi & Khalifah, (2014), involvement of the community is considered as a way of empowering them, building their knowledge, skills and incomes necessary for supporting the ecotourism initiatives locally without requiring external support. This explanation notes that sustainability of projects would be achieved if communities participate not only in the initiation and planning but also in the implementation of the programs.

2.6 Community Involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation on Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Projects

Monitoring quantifies environmental and social variables throughout project implementation and tracks progress in implementation of activities as well as assessing the level of achievement of the expected results. It evaluates the impact of a project on a continuous basis while ensuring that projects comply with set standards; hence, it is carried out on periodic basis (Ojok & Basheka, 2016). In addition to this, Kyalo, Mulwa, Mbugua, & Obare (2016), explains that monitoring and evaluation is an important process that organizations, institutions and governments can use make projects implemented more successful and sustainable. Further, Monitoring and evaluation can be used to inform policies developed to govern project implementation and sector development plans.

Monitoring and evaluation being a critical process in project implementation, it must be done appropriately if the gains are to be expected. Scholars have pointed out that projects are implemented for the stakeholders, the host community and the direct beneficiaries. Therefore, their interests must be incorporated in these project designs and must be involved in the entire project cycle management. Sulemana, Musah & Simon, (2018) emphasis the need for community participation in project tracking as a precursor to its success and that decision making on small decisions was not necessary, however, major decisions have higher significance on project performance if stakeholders were not adequately involved. Ultimately, lessons learned from the evaluation process are owned by all the stakeholders and the community and this facilitates a binding decision making. Ofosu and Ntiamoah (2016) conducted an assessment. They based their study on Kwahu West Municipal Assembly, Ghana. They confirmed that involvement of the society in project tracking and assessment has a far-reaching implication on the project longevity

as it empowers them, provides them with the basis to answer the questions what, how, and why, of project activities.

According to Simister (2015), involving stakeholders and the community in M&E data collection helps in generating relevant and appropriate data useful in informing decision after analysis. They are able to know what directly affects them and what is relevant to their livelihoods and day to day concerns. In so doing, monitoring and evaluation reporting becomes factual and validated by the used and consumers of the project services or products. Lammert (2015) indicates that that reporting and dissemination of findings is an important communication method which is states who can transmit the M&E field findings, what in essence is to be communicated, who to be communicated to, by when and through which means and frequency. When communities and stakeholders are involved, this process becomes easy and authentic.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Program Theory

Weiss 1972, theory informs the way programs and projects are developed to contribute to the expected results and also outline the consequences therein should the process fail to proceed appropriately. The theory usually defines the way in which an intervention is interpreted to lead to an outcome that produces anticipated or definite consequences. According to this theory, the programme's philosophy has three components: the activities or inputs in the program, the desired outcomes and procedures for achieving the desired results. A description of the essential inputs specifies the program components, describes how they are supplied, identifies their strength or quantity, and outlines the features necessary that are vital to achieving the desired objectives. The processes that depend on the output should be specified and that follow the inputs.

Theories applicability to this study is that the study focuses on the project cycle management which is the basis for project monitoring and evaluation, planning, initiation, and implementation. This current study considers these as the variable being community participation in each of these phases of the project cycle. This theory informs that the right actions, inputs, procedures must be followed through pout the project cycle so that the expected results are valid and useful.

2.7.2 Theory of Constraints (TOC)

This theory has in the past gained prominence with scholars in problem solving and establishing methodologies (Zunep, 2014). The proponent of the theory of constraints (T.O.C) is Eliyahu Goldratt, who developed it in 1984. The theory of constraints holds that every system has a limiting factor or bottleneck that impedes its performance. The theory's objective is to identify and manage that constraint and assess the system's performance with the necessary improvements in place. Noting that in a system, the 'weakest link' which must be strengthened or improved to cause improvement of the organization as a whole is the constraint to the institution (Goldratt, 1994). The relevance is that project design, planning and implementation are constrained by the cost, time, scope and quality. Therefore, these key elements must be carefully planned. If this process is done without involving the community, then it becomes difficult, and the project is likely to be constrained in the process and fail to be sustainable in the long run.

2.8 The Conceptual Framework

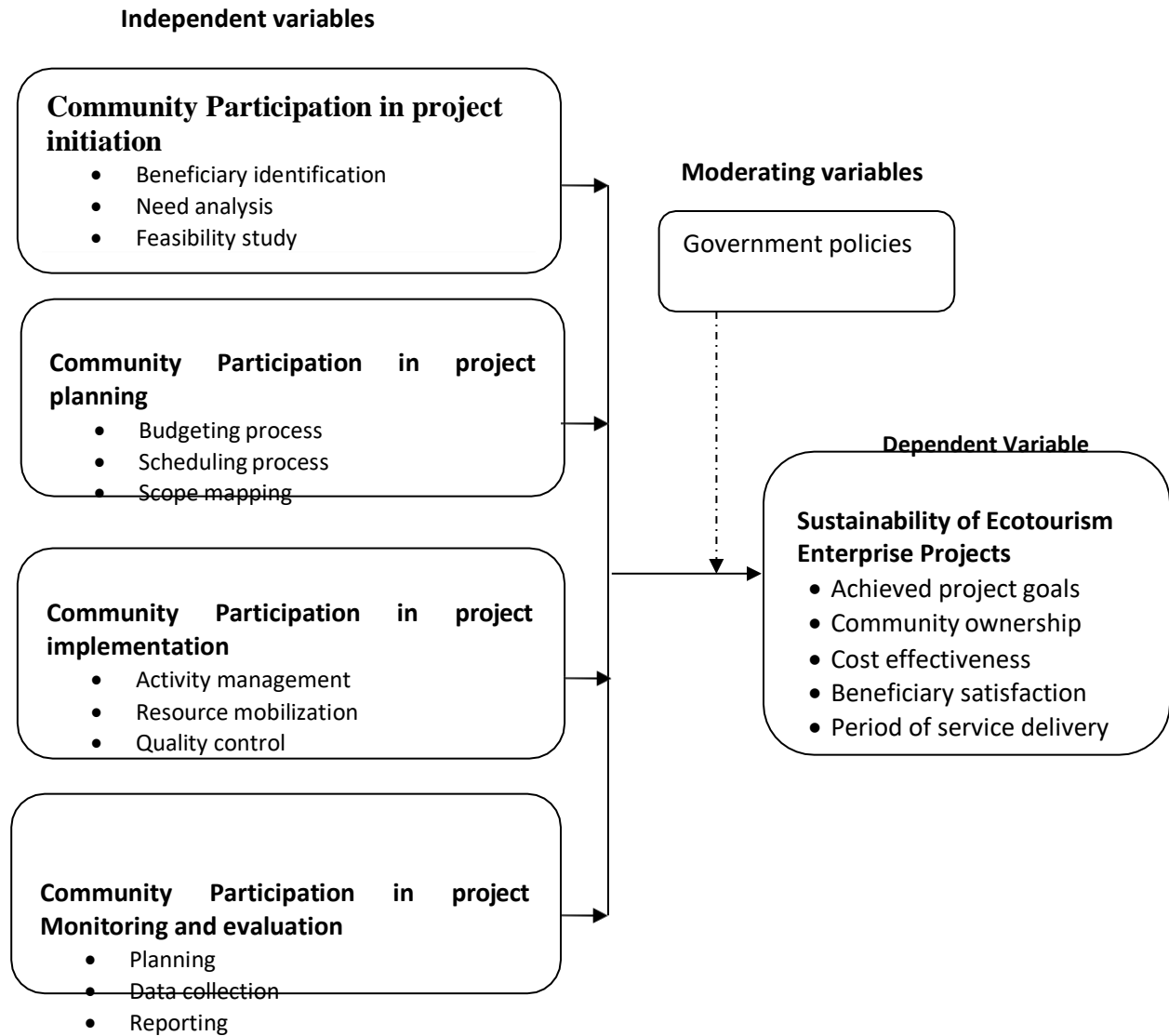


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

2.9 Knowledge Gap

Below table shows the knowledge gap

Table 2.1: Summary of Empirical Literature Review and Research Gap

Title	Author	Findings	Gap
Project initiation	Shu and Senbeta (2019)	Implementation management modalities have an impact on the longevity of water supply projects.	This research did not look at initiation models within the project cycle

	Gichuki et al;(2017)	The extent engaging the community can lead to project actualization or failure as a factor of community engagement, level of awareness, extent of stake, skills of the project leader, project leadership, leader's soft skills, and projects technical requirements.	The study left of cultural transformation through training which influences initiation and performance of water supply projects
Project planning	Kibuika F. Mwangi, Wanyoike Daniel	study established that respondents did not agree there existed efficient line patrolling, record keeping and also a record on demand versus supply and leakages	Gap exists in the findings' given water is available as a result from activities in the project management cycle
Project Planning	Mueke et, al. (2021)	Planning influences successful completion water supply projects	The study addressed cycle planning as encompassing resources only
Project Execution	Mutiso and Mutunga (2020)	Technical competency influenced the successful implementation of water supply	The study did not address the project design factors within the implementation process
Project implementation	Daniel wanyoike and Patrick Muthui	The findings were community involvement affected sustainability of water project in that the community did not engage in idea generation but in provision of labor budgeting and participating in meetings.	Gap exists in that Participation, in project is through understanding the Project cycle process to enhance understanding and ownership, not provision of labor, and that community needs to own the ideas of a project.
Project Monitoring and evaluation	Marco. (2016)	Interpreting project objectives is easier than dealing with project goals, while constant focus on project objectives only may not be enough to sustain organizational success by focusing on goals, it indirectly contributes to objectives.	The study has not addressed, monitoring of objectives at each level of project implementation but as a blanket approach.

Project Monitoring	Naeen, et. Al. (2018)	Project planning is positively associated with project risk management and organizational culture and impact on project success	Monitoring in planning is not looked at as a componential element of the project cycle, but as a constituent element in monitoring
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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this study

3.2 Research Design

This component is very key in research. It is the road map or framework in which the research is developed and conducted. Both descriptive survey and correlative research designs were used. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between two variables: community participation in project cycle management and the sustainability of ecotourism development projects. As such, the study needed to interpret conditions that exist as they are, by use of the research tools thus a descriptive survey design was useful. For this purpose, descriptive inferences generating qualitative data was employed. On the other hand, the study sought to establish the correlation by testing the suggested hypothesis thus the use of correlational research design. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008), a correlational research design enables the determination of the relationship between two or more variables through the use of inferential statistics.

3.3 Target Population

Due to various limitations, it becomes difficult to conduct studies based on all the persons of interest in a study and therefore there is need to sample a representative population. However, without making this population clear, it is not possible to sample. The target population was based on project beneficiaries who are organized in User groups. In this project, there were 294 members from 6 user groups. Membership was spread across the project area and included men and women. In addition to this, Board members, tour guides, the management and community project contact people were be targeted.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Category	Target population	Percentage
Project beneficiaries	158	53.7
Board	49	16.7
Tour guides	29	9.9
Management	58	19.7
Total	294	100

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

3.4.1 Sample Size

Sample size of 167 was determined as follows using krecie and Morgan table 1970 formula

$$s = \frac{x^2NP(1 - P)}{d^2 (N - 1) + x^2P(1 - P)}$$

S= Required sample size.

x² The table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841)

N= The population size

P= The population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since it would provide the maximum sample size).

d= The degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05)

Therefore

$$S = \frac{3.841(294)(0.5)(1-0.5)}{0.05^2 (294-1)+3.841(0.5)(1-0.5)} = 166.713481$$

3.4.2 Sampling Procedure

To account for the heterogeneity of the population, a stratified random sampling procedure was utilized in this study. The population was divided into distinct and homogeneous groups or strata. The population had the CFA user group members, forest guides/rangers and members of the board. All the members of the respective groups were put together and randomly selected proportionately.

This was to ascertain that all the categories had similar chances of being chosen proportionately to the study sample

Key informants were sampled using purposive sampling procedure because the information required from them was very specific and they were the only people who can give such information. Therefore 12 key informants were selected purposively.

3.5.1 Piloting of Instruments

In this study, pilot testing targeted interviewees, who were of the same category as those that responded in the main study. In this case, piloting was undertaken in a different location, which is Lewa conservancy where this study was not to be conducted. The selected population for the pilot study had similar characteristic as that of the main study. Braun and Clarke (2016) suggest that for a small study, the size of the sample should be 6-10 individuals. However, it is a rule that one should work with 10% of the defined sample for piloting, according to Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003. In this case, this research followed 10% rule of participants. They were taken using stratified random sampling. Results from this study were used to test the validity of the tools.

3.4.5 Validity of Research Instruments

Golafshani (2003) observes that validity is concerned about the truthfulness of results. In this respect, pilot testing was also be utilized to enhance the validity. This entailed making sure that the research questions were clear and that their meaning was relatively the same among respondents. Accordingly, before pre-testing, opinions from peer students were established as well as suggestions made for improving the questions before expert's opinion was sought from university's supervisor.

The operationalization of the variables was carried out carefully to enhance the construct validity. This involved making sure that translations were conducted in the right way to reflect construct's true meaning. This was in accordance with Zohrabi (2013) who relates construct validity with the way researchers transform or translate ideas and/or concepts into functional realities. The university's supervisor was therefore consulted throughout the variable operationalization process. The content validity was addressed via theoretical definition of the variables. Additionally, expert's opinion from university's supervisors was also sought to enhance content validity. Accordingly, research instruments were reviewed and improved as the supervisor advised to

ensure that the instrument was in line with study's objectives. Triangulation method was utilized to enhance the accuracy of qualitative findings. The process will entail obtaining data from different sources to enhance internal validity, having sufficient time collecting the data and using fellow researchers to review qualitative questions so that the account would be in one accord with the mass rather than the researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.4.6 Reliability of Research Instruments

The reliability of an instrument relates to consistency of findings if an instrument would be utilized to collect data for a second or a third time. Different procedures were utilized to enhance the consistency of study's findings as suggested by Zohrabi (2013). Some of those methods involved triangulating the data by combining qualitative and quantitative data. Others involved sampling respondents to ensure that if the study would be repeated, the instrument would provide almost similar responses. Reliability was checked using the Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient. A coefficient of 0.7 was accepted as a good level.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The study information was gathered in a procedural manner while observing the agreed research protocols and ethical issues. Of utmost importance, the researcher and research assistants were cognizance of the prevailing Covid 19 situation. In this case, the team observed all the government guidelines to remain safe together with the study respondents. After obtaining of transmittal letter from the University, the researcher obtained a permit from NACOSTI and then proceeded to obtain permission and seek support from the County government. This also included reporting to the ministry of agriculture and ministry of tourism. As a procedure, the researcher informed the local community leaders about the ongoing research activity in their respective locations.

Before embarking on collecting data, the researcher trained research assistants who were involved in both data collections for piloting study and the actual research. These were the principle assistant researchers. Prior appointments were done with the key informants. Where face to face interviews was not be possible, the researcher arranged for online interviews using Google meet or zoom platforms. The researcher left the research surveys with the respondents to fill them out then get them later. This was expected to give a humble time to the respondents for answering to the questionnaire.

3.7 Data analysis Techniques

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed. Therefore, mixed mode of data analysis was used. Data collected from respondents was be sorted, cleaned and coded appropriately to allow data entry and analysis. Clean data was entered to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) software that was used to generate data outputs for interpretation presentation and discussions. The SPSS was used for data analyses and outputs such as Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentages, and Frequencies.

Hypothesis testing was done through regression analysis. The following sections show the correlation and regression model for the four objectives of this study.

Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Development Projects = f (Community participation in project cycle management)

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

Where:

Y = DV sustainability of ecotourism enterprise development projects

a = y-intercept (constant)

X₁ = Community involvement the initiation of the project

X₂ = Community involvement in the planning of the project

X₃ = Community involvement in the implementation of the project

X₄ = Community involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the project

ε = Allowable error

The qualitative data from interview guides was organized thematically and analyzed using narrations. Analysis for qualitative data involved reading the data so as to gain the familiarization, coding the data with appropriate terms so as to describe the content, pattern generation, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes and interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2013). The narrative was used to support the descriptive statistics obtained from the analysis of the numerical data.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are an important part of increasing the integrity and validity of the research findings. Eaton (2020) cites the following as the most common ethical issues in research: lack of acknowledgement of cited materials, conflicts of interests, lack of respect and informed consent to research parties, dishonestly in data analysis. In carrying out this study, no respondents were coerced to either participate or respond. Participants were not subjected to any pain or misdeed. All ethical requirements legal rights of respondents were upheld. Research intentions were freely shared with the respondents. The researcher remained objective and honest throughout the research period.

3.9 Operationalization of Variables

Table 3.1: Operationalization of Variables

Objectives	Variable	Indicator	Measurement scale	Tools of Analysis	Types of Statistical Analysis
Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Development Projects	Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Development Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attained project objectives • Community ownership • Practical expenditure • Stakeholder fulfillment • Period of service delivery 	Interval Ordinal	Mean, SD, Percentages, Frequencies Pearson's Regression	Inferential and Descriptive Statistics,
To investigate the impact of community involvement in project initiation on viability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.	Community involvement in project initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiary identification • Need analysis • Feasibility study 	Interval Ordinal	Mean, SD, Percentages, Frequencies Pearson's Regression	Inferential and Descriptive Statistics,

To assess the influence of community participation in project planning on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.	Community Participation in project planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting process • Scheduling process • Scope mapping 	Interval Ordinal	Mean, SD, Percentages, Frequencies Pearson's Regression	Inferential and Descriptive Statistics,
To establish the influence of community participation in implementation on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya.	Community Participation in project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity management • Resource mobilization • Quality control 			
To investigate the impact of community involvement in tracking and assessment on viability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya	Community involvement in project tracking and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Data collection • Reporting 	Interval Ordinal	Mean, SD, Percentages, Frequencies Pearson's Regression	Descriptive & Inferential Statistics.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the process of analyzing the data collected, including the presentation and interpretation of the information gathered. The data includes general demographic details and community involvement in the various stages of project management and its impact on the sustainability of ecotourism projects in Meru County, Kenya.

4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate

The research involved 167 interviewees in data collection. The table 4.1 shows the rate as to which the questionnaire was filled. Out of 167 respondents targeted, 127 filled and brought back the questionnaire resulting to 76% rate of response. However, 40 respondents which is equivalent to 24% failed to respond to the questions within the stipulated time.

Table 4.1 Questionnaire response rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Answered questionnaires	127	76
Un-answered questionnaires	40	24
Total	167	100

4.3 Demographic Characterization of the Respondents

4.3.1 Sex of respondents

In this section, the data collector was interested to determine the distribution of respondents by sex orientation

Table 4.2 Gender of the Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	103	81.2

Female	24	18.8
Total	127	100

According to the findings, 81.2% of the participants were identified as male while 18.8% were female. These results imply that the management of the ecology in Meru County is largely dominated by men.

4.3.2. Distribution of respondents by age

Table 4.3 Age of the respondents

Age in Years	Frequency	Percentage
25-35	42	33.9
35-45	17	13.4
45-55	37	29.1
55 years and above	31	23.6
Total	127	100

Findings indicate that 42.5%, were between the ages of 35 and 55 years. Approximately 33.9% were between 25 and 35 years, and 23.6% were 55 years and older. Given that the majority of respondents were adults, it can be assumed that they were capable of making informed decisions about the sustainability of ecotourism projects.

4.4 Sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects

In this study, sustainability of the ecotourism enterprise project was identified as the dependent variable. The respondents were given a questionnaire with a Likert scale to indicate the level.

Table 4.3 Sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects

Statements	Mean	STD
There are measurable indicators to show achievement of result in Ecotourism project	3.75	1.294
The project's activities, objectives, mission, and vision has met community's expectations.	4.32	1.34

The running of the ecosystem project has been in line with the set budgets and has been cost effective.	3.89	1.01
The implementation of each phase of the ecosystem project is within the framework and timelines	3.61	1.498

There are measurable indicators to show achievement of result in Ecotourism project, project's activities, objectives, mission and vision has met community's expectations, that running of the ecosystem project has been in line with the set budgets and has been cost effective and that implementation of each phase of the ecosystem project is within the framework and timelines with a mean of 3.75, 4.32, 3.89 and 3.61 respectively. These results concur with Obar, et al. (2017) who focused on community involvement in sustainable projects that focus on developing the community socially in Nigeria and revealed that community participation in the project cycle management is a key ingredient to project sustainability.

4.5 Community participation in project cycle management

Table 4.5 indicates respondent's degree of agreement on how community members are involved at initiation stage of the ecotourism enterprise projects.

Table 4.6 Community Involvement in project initiation

	MEAN	STD
Community facilitation has an influence on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	3.74	1.041
Coaching and educating as a feature of community facilitation has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects	3.66	1.133
Skills and experiences of the workers have an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	3.71	0.899
The education level has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	4.15	0.009

This includes facilitation through coaching and education, as well as the skills and experiences of the workers and the level of their education. The average scores for these factors were around 3.7 with a standard deviation of around 1. The findings suggest that the respondents believe that community facilitation, worker skills and education all have a positive impact

4.5.2 Community Participation in Project Planning and Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Projects

Research to find out from the respondents the degree to which they agreed or disagreed The respondent’s responses are shown in table 4.7.

Table4.7 Community involvement in project planning on sustainability of ecosystem enterprise projects

	Mean	STD
Project planning strategies has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects	4.58	0.23
Being assisted in technical terms as a feature in planning of projects has an impact on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	3.96	0.74
Reporting back as a feature in project planning has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	3.94	0.73
The number of times a project is monitored has an effect the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects	3.54	0.87
Organization capacity as an aspect of project planning has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	4.69	0.30

Results in 4.7 shows that the respondents had a positive opinion on the parameters under study concerning community participation in project planning. Tespondents agreed with the statements that Project planning strategies has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects, Being assisted in technical terms as a feature in planning of projects has an impact on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects, The number of times a project is monitored has an effect the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects and that Organization capacity as an aspect of project planning has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.

The responses had a mean score of 4.58, 3.96, 3.94, 3.54 and 4.69 respectively and a standard deviation of 0.23, 0.74, 0.73, 0.87 and 0.30.

4.5.3 Community Involvement in Implementation and Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Projects

This research further aimed to investigate community involvement in implementation on the ecotourism project.

Table 4.8 Community participation in implementation of the ecotourism enterprise project

	Mean	STD
The sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects is impacted by institutional linkages and networks.	4.19	0.800
The number of networks is an aspect of institutional linkages and networks that affects the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	3.64	0.284
The utilization of advisors is an aspect of institutional linkages and networks that impacts the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	4.5	0.03
Membership in associations is an aspect of institutional linkages and networks that affects the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.	4.59	0.083

The utilization of advisors and membership in organizations were also identified as factors that impact the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.

4.5.4 Influence of Project Monitoring and Evaluation on Sustainability of Ecotourism Enterprise Projects

Table 4.9: Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation on sustainability of Ecotourism enterprise project

	Mean	STD
Management practices influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects	4.34	0.215

New quality improvement measures influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects	4.31	0.29
The sustainability of ecotourism projects can be impacted by the introduction of different types of new technology.	4.08	0.91
Record keeping influences the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects	3.68	0.96

The participants agreed that management practices, quality improvement schemes, implementation of new technology, and record-keeping all play a role in the sustainability of ecotourism projects. This was demonstrated by the high mean scores of 4.34, 4.31, 4.08, and 3.68 respectively.

4.6 Coefficient of Correlation

The study utilized Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to demonstrate the correlation between the variables under investigation and their respective outcomes.

Table 4.9 Coefficient of correlation

Variables		Projects sustainability	Project Initiation	Project planning	Monitoring & Evaluation	Project implementation
Projects sustainability	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Participation in initiation	Pearson Correlation	0.5243	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0032				
project planning	Pearson Correlation	0.5127	0.3421	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0021	0.0014			
Monitoring & Evaluation	Pearson Correlation	0.6210	0.1240	0.0621	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0043	0.0120	0.0043		
Implementation	Pearson Correlation	0.5030	0.3420	0.0125	0.1660	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0172	0.0031	0.0423	0.0031	

The research employed Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine the relationship between the study variables and their outcomes. The results indicated a favorable correlation (with a

correlation value of 0.5243) between community participation during the initiation stage and ecotourism project sustainability. Additionally, the study revealed positive correlations between ecotourism project sustainability and project planning (correlation value of 0.5127), monitoring and evaluation (correlation value of 0.6210), and project implementation (correlation value of 0.5030).

Table 4.4 Model Summary

Model	R	r²	Adjusted r²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.742	0.551	0.641	0.0438

The (r²) coefficient indicates the extent to which the independent variables (initiation, project planning, monitoring & evaluation, and implementation) elucidate the dependent variable (sustainability of ecotourism projects). According to the study's findings, these four independent variables accounted for 55.1% of the variability in ecotourism project sustainability, which was confirmed by the adjusted (r²) in figure 4.10. The research also showed that the remaining 44.9% of the variation in ecotourism project sustainability was due to factors that were not investigated in the study.

4.7 Multiple Regressions

To investigate the effect of community participation on ecotourism project sustainability, the researcher employed multiple regression analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to establish the relationship between various independent or predictor variables and the dependent or criterion variable. The collected data from the participants was then subjected to analysis using SPSS version 25.0 software, which enabled the researcher to assess the degree to which modifications in a particular independent variable had an impact on the dependent variable.

Table 4.5 Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
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	β	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant/Y Intercept	1.279	1.316		1.451	0.357
Initiation	0.531	0.310	0.172	4.242	0.0276
Project planning	0.525	0.322	0.067	3.452	0.0202
Monitoring & Evaluation	0.613	0.156	0.210	3.382	0.0285
Implementation	0.510	0.245	0.148	3.358	0.0249

($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \epsilon$) becomes:

$$Y = 1.279 + 0.531 X_1 + 0.525 X_2 + 0.613 X_3 + 0.510 X_4$$

According to the regression analysis, the involvement of the community in the initiation stage significantly affects the sustainability of ecotourism projects in Meru County, Kenya. The results indicate that when all other factors are held constant, an increase in community involvement leads to a corresponding increase in the sustainability of ecotourism projects, with a coefficient of 0.531. As a result, the null hypothesis, which suggested no significant correlation between community involvement and sustainability, was rejected. Furthermore, the results of the multiple regression analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between community involvement in project planning, monitoring and evaluation, and the sustainability of ecotourism projects in Meru County, Kenya. A one-unit increase in community involvement in project planning was associated with a 0.525 increase in the sustainability of ecotourism projects, and a one-unit increase in monitoring and evaluation led to a 0.613 increase in sustainability. Both of these findings rejected the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between community participation in project planning and monitoring and evaluation, respectively. In contrast, the impact of implementation on the sustainability of ecotourism projects was relatively smaller, with a coefficient of 0.510, but still significant. The null hypothesis, which stated that there was no significant correlation between implementation and sustainability, was also rejected. In conclusion, monitoring and evaluation had the most significant impact on the sustainability of ecotourism projects, followed by project initiation and planning. Meanwhile, implementation had a relatively smaller influence on the sustainability of ecotourism projects.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The findings and discussions are compiled in this chapter, along with conclusions, recommendations, and potential directions for further study.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

Out of the 167 intended participants, 127 completed and submitted the survey, resulting in a response rate of 76%. The results and suggestions were based on this response rate. The gender distribution of the participants was balanced, with 81.2% being male and 18.8% being female. 42.5% of the participants were aged between 35 and 55, 33.9% were in the age range of 25 to 35, and 23.6% were 55 years or older. This indicates that the participants had practical knowledge.

Project involvement in initiation stage entails coaching and educating, skills and experiences of the workers, and education level and these affect project sustainability in community participation in ecotourism project in Meru County. Communities are willing to participate socially and economically for project sustainability in community participation. Further locals are given responsibility to providing information and tallying development needs on the projects.

According to the findings, participation in the project's planning phase can have a positive influence on its sustainability, as demonstrated by the second objective. Such can be done by having project planning strategies, assisting community members in understanding some of the technical terms as a feature in planning and organizing for capacity building as one of the features of project planning. The analyzed data show that greater percentage affirmed that Project planning strategies has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects, Being assisted in technical terms as a feature in planning of projects has an impact on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects. Number of times a project is monitored has an effect the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects and that Organization capacity as an aspect of project planning has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects. The respondents agreed with the statements that project planning strategies has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects, being assisted in technical terms, and reporting back

Being involved in implementation is a crucial factor in empowering communities to carry out the project successfully. Community involvement in the implementation process enables members to take on leadership roles, become accountable, and develop new strategies to improve project sustainability. Engaging the community during implementation helps communities build their problem-solving skills and enhance their ability to achieve project objectives and thus sustainability. Institutional linkages and networks and use of advisors is another factor that influences sustainability, and that membership in associations is also a factor that affects sustainability. In addition, utilization of monitoring and evaluation results was found to be important.

The study found that monitoring and evaluation are essential to the implementation of projects across all sectors. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly believed that the management strategies have a significant impact on the sustainability of ecotourism projects. Additionally, the respondents agreed that implementing programs for enhancing quality and incorporating new technologies both contribute to the sustainability of ecotourism projects.

5.3 Discussion of the Findings

The study revealed that project initiation significantly affects the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise development projects. Specifically, community facilitation, which involves coaching and educating,

was found to have a positive impact on sustainability, as did the skills and experiences of workers and their level of education. These findings are consistent with Claiborne's (2010) study on community participation in tourism development and social capital in Kenya, which found that ecotourism beneficiaries have limited involvement. The study pointed those beneficiaries are rarely involved in critical decision involving ecotourism initiatives and they are mainly involved in supply of goods and services and entertainment of tourists. Thus, the level of ownership of such initiatives gets compromised in the process.

On the influence of project planning on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects, the study established that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements that Project planning strategies has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects, being assisted in technical terms as a feature in planning of projects has an impact on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects, reporting back as a feature in project planning has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects, the number of times a project is monitored has an effect the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects and that organization capacity as an aspect of project planning has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects. This agrees with a study conducted by Mueke, et al. (2021), who established that quality planning is essential in ensuring that a project delivers as expected. The study revealed that resource planning as a panacea for successful completion of projects. Also, studies by Nicholus (2017), Gitonga (2014) are in line with these findings where they content that planing for cost and time is critical for a project to succeed and it is through appropriate planning that cost over runs and delivery delay is checked. This literature emphasis that there is need for proper planning for project components.

Ebrahimi &Khalifah, (2014), in their study noted that involvement of the community is considered as a way of empowering them, building their knowledge, skills and incomes necessary for supporting the ecotourism initiatives locally without requiring external support. This explanation notes that sustainability of projects would be achieved if communities participate not only in the initiation and planning but also in the implementation of the programs and this finding agrees with the findings.

The majority of respondents strongly agreed that the management strategies play a crucial role in the sustainability of ecotourism projects, with an average score of 4.34. The respondents also

agreed that introducing quality improvement schemes and various forms of new technology can enhance the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects. Finally, respondents agreed that record keeping influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects. These findings on monitoring and evaluation are in concurrent with those of Kyalo, Mulwa, Mbugua, & Obare (2016) which explains that monitoring and evaluation is an important process that organizations, institutions and governments can use make projects implemented more successful and sustainable. Further, Monitoring and evaluation can be used to inform policies developed to govern project implementation and sector development plans.

5.4 Conclusions

To conclude, we find that that poor lack of participation is the main challenge that affects sustainability of projects. In this involvement, the community's views, choices, needs and feelings are put into consideration and this ensures that decision making powers with regard to implementation of project are transferred to the local communities so as to improve on the performance of the project and consequently increase their rate of sustainability. To the influence of community participation in planning for the project, the study established involving the community in project planning plays the managerial role in implementation of the projects. Communities are willing to participate socially and economically in terms of project accountability in community participation. The study also found that locals are given responsibility to providing information and tallying development needs on the projects.

By involving community in monitoring and evaluation on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise development projects, the study unveiled that technology utilized in project implementation can be effective in monitoring and evaluation. Local communities are not at all involved in monitoring and evaluation of projects. Political support for community participation is the best approach that can be employed in improving project monitoring and evaluation in projects.

5.5 Recommendations

County governments should not assume that they can comprehensively deliver public services on their own. Instead, they should involve community members in service delivery to improve their understanding of services and inform the procurement process, resulting in better delivery of

public services. It is essential to develop a clear strategy for this process by defining the community's roles and the issues that should be considered to inform stakeholder development.

When planning for community participation in projects, the County Governments is recommended to use different modes of communication to inform the public on timings, venue, and topic of discussion. The most influential people in the community, online platforms, local leaders like pastors, priests, chiefs, and other influential persons in the community can be used to spread the message. With these, the community members will use these forums and will be able to point out their opinions to ensure the projects implemented caters for their needs.

The county governments must develop ferocious civic education programs emphasizing the value of community involvement in projects. This is because, as was already said, a sizable portion of respondents were unaware of their constitutional right to participate in public affairs.

The public should also be educated on the value of attending such forums as part of the endeavor to increase public awareness of public forums. When choosing a project, carrying it out, and evaluating its success, the opinions and issues expressed by participants in public involvement platforms should be considered. By doing this, it will be ensured that only the residents' top priorities are carried out.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

There need for additional investigations into the effects of public involvement in other areas of project management that were not explored. Furthermore, recommended to carry out a study on public participation affects to economic growth in rural regions, such as those managed by county governments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire

The aim of this case study questions is to investigate the impact of community involvement in beneficiary needs analysis on viability of ecotourism enterprise projects in Meru County, Kenya. Please try and answer all the questions with honesty. To ensure that your answers remain confidential, you are advised not to put down your name or any other detail that could reveal your identity.

Part One: Details of the interviewees

Mark \surd where it is appropriate and write the answers in the gaps given.

1. Sex
 - i. Male []
 - ii. Female []
2. Informants length of life in years
 - i. Age of 24 and below []
 - ii. Age between 25-36 []
 - iii. Age between 35-46 []
 - iv. Age between 45-56 []
 - v. 56 years plus []
3. The level of education attained.
 - i. Never []
 - ii. Primary []
 - iii. Secondary []
 - iv. University/College []
 - v. Masters/Doctorate []
4. For how many years have you been part of the ecotourism enterprise project?
 - I. 1 []
 - II. 2-3 []
 - III. 4-5 []
 - IV. Above 5 years []

Part Two: Sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects

1. Rate the drift of sustainability aspects of ecotourism enterprise projects for the period of the last five years? Where, 5 = greatly improved, 4= improved, 3= constant, 2= decreased, 1 = greatly decreased

	1	2	3	4	5
Achievement of result indicators					
Level of Community Satisfaction					
Cost within budget					
Timeliness					

Part Three: Influence of community participation in project initiation on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects.

Tick appropriately [] whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Where:

SA=Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree

SN	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Community facilitation has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
2	Coaching and educating as a feature of community facilitation has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
3	Skills and experiences of the workers has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
4	The education level has an influence on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					

3. In what other ways do community involvement in project initiation impact the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects?

Community Participation in Project Planning

Indicate by use of a tick [√] your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

where:

SA=Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree

SN	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Project planning strategies has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
2	Being assisted in technical terms as a feature in planning of projects has an impact on sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
3	Reporting back as a feature in project planning has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
4	The number of times a project is monitored has an effect the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
5	Organization capacity as an aspect of project planning has an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					

4. In what other ways does Community involvement in Project planning impact the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects?

Community Participation in Implementation

Indicate by use of a tick [√] your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements where:

SA=Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree

SN	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Institutional linkages and networks influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
2	Number of networks as an aspect institutional linkages and networks influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
3	Use of advisors as an aspect institutional linkages and networks influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
4	Membership in associations as an aspect of institutional linkages and networks influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					

5. In what other ways do the Community involvement in Implementation and networks impact the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects?

Community Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation

Indicate by use of a tick [√] your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

where:

SA=Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree

SN	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Management practices influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
2	Introducing schemes for improving quality influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
3	Introducing various forms of new technology influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					
4	Record keeping influence the sustainability of ecotourism enterprise projects					

5. In what other ways do the community involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation impact the longevity of ecotourism enterprise projects?

Thank you for Participation.