

Public Participation in the Policy Making Process: An Evaluation of Makueni County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to evaluate public participation in the policy making process in Makueni County. This was so because, despite the Makueni County Government generally accepted framework for public participation, there is limited information on how that framework has impacted or been used in the policy making process. Specifically, the study sought to assess the extent of awareness by the residents of Makueni of their democratic right and opportunities to participate in the policy making process; analyzed the levels of citizens involvement in policy making processes in Makueni County; established the perception towards public participation in policy making process by residents and management in Makueni County; and determined the barriers to public participation in policy making process by residents and management in Makueni County. The study was anchored on Stakeholder Theory, Arnstein's Ladder and the Multi Streams Model. The study was hinged on descriptive survey research design and targeted the 884,527 residents of Makueni and the 217 County Public service Departmental staff in Makueni County. Stratified sampling was used to delineate 117 staff in terms of their positions, whether management or operations excluding the subordinate staff. Simple random sampling was used to get 396 residents. Focus Group Discussions and questionnaires were the primary data collection instruments. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of percentages and frequencies. Linear regression model analysis was also used to analyze data. The results established that the residents were unaware of their democratic right and opportunities for participation in policy making process in Makueni County. There were also low levels of citizens' involvement in policy making processes in Makueni County. Further, perception about public participation by residents was both negative for those who felt let down by the county management and positive for those who mainly felt hopeful that despite those challenges, things improve for the better in terms of public participation in policy making process in Makueni County. Additionally, financial, physical resource, human resource and technological barriers were identified as having considerable negative impact on citizen participation in policy making process. The study thus recommends that Makueni County management should embark on renewed promotional strategies to create awareness among citizens of their democratic right and opportunities for participation in policy making process in Makueni County. Further, the citizens themselves should be proactive and employ necessary mechanisms of obtaining information from the county government and demand participation. The Makueni County management should on the other hand, formulate a framework that stipulates the measures to be applied towards fully involving the citizens. The Makueni County management should also be more transparent and accountable in order to help build a positive perception about public participation amongst the residents. Moreover, the Makueni County management should engage in robust resource mobilization of finances, physical, human and technological resources that advance public participation in policy making process. On a policy level, the County Assembly should amend existing public participation legislation to make it more responsive to the needs of citizens. The executive should on their part robustly implement public participation processes going forward.

Key Words: *Public Participation, Policy Making Process, Makueni County, Citizens Involvement in Policy Making Processes, Barriers to Public Participation in Policy Making Process*

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1. Introduction

The transition from a centralized system to a decentralized one across the world has been underpinned, often, by the need for inclusivity, better management of resources, bringing power to the local citizens and cascading decision making to the lowest cadres of citizens. The centralized systems in the USA through its federalism arrangement, the one in Germany and the one practiced in Scandinavian countries like Sweden are keenly predicated on those factors. In the recent past, notably the last 10 years, Kenya has steadily but strongly transitioned from a centralized system of government to a decentralized one. The transition was catalyzed by the numerous but significant shortfalls inherent in a centralized form of government. Such shortfalls comprise, but are not limited to, corruption and embezzlement of public funds; administrative inefficiencies and bureaucracies coupled with significant marginalization of both ethnic and local communities especially in regards to the policy making and implementation processes. Public policy describes the measures assumed and later implemented by government vide decisions proposed to resolve problems and advance the quality of life and livelihoods for its citizens. (Silva & Bassi, 2012). Additionally, Weible and Carter (2017) assert that a scholarly examination of public policy must include an examination of the connections that exist between contexts, events, actors, public policies and intended outcomes. In westernized countries, public policy at the federal and state level are implemented to regulate businesses, offer additional funding to disenfranchised and poor citizens, protect citizens living both at home and those abroad and offer safeguards for social outcomes (Secchi, 2014). A government policy typically assumes the following steps, agenda building, formulation, adoption, implementation, evaluation, and termination (Howlett, Ramesh and Perl, 2013; Silva & Bassi, 2012).

Public policy making process, as a field of knowledge, originated in the 1950s in American political science (Melo, 2018). However, there is still no consensus among researchers on its concept. There are a variety of descriptions and conceptions for public policies, ranging from the archetypal concepts gathered from political science to the more sophisticated but contemporary definitions. Lowi's (1964) must have been among the first to locate policy making process in politics with his noted assertion that '*policy creates politics (p. 34)*' and which basically initiated the understanding that public policy emerges from a process of disputations in different decision arenas and thus requires public participation. Current conceptions exemplify this political element by viewing public policy as more than a decision enacted by governmental but one that may also come out of actions and decisions made by other actors like citizens, lobbyists, civil society and even the market (Howlett, et al, 2013; Schabbach, 2012). Moreover, the public policy making process can be influenced by the needs, ideologies and interests of private, civil society or public-based actors (The three arms of government) (Silva & Bassi, 2012; Secchi, 2014).

A range of theoretical models have been developed in order to explain the various aspects of the policy making process (Weible & Carter, 2017). The most important are those well known in the international literature (Petridou, 2014; Weible & Carter, 2017) and that have been applied even to the Kenyan reality (Mutisya, 2017): They are, the multiple streams model originally espoused by Kingdon (1984), the punctuated equilibrium model postulated by Baumgartner and Jones (2013) and the advocacy coalitions model espoused by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (2013). The above listed theoretical frameworks view public policy process as an unstable, multifaceted process underpinned by power interactions among major actors. Additionally, the public policy process comprises major variables that include the media, opinion makers, ideas and ideologies all of which are major contributors to the way policies are consolidated. As a result of their reach and potential to adapt allowing the analysis of different types of public policy, the three models became attractive tools to study the process of construction of different policies in different realities. However, the multiple streams model will apply to this study to try and ascertain how public participation has impacted the policy making process.

Public participation coupled with public involvement constitutes a basic principle of a nations' democracy. Citizen participation was described by Armitage (1988) as the process by which citizens voice their concerns and opinions publicly concerning public decisions impacting their lives. Chappel, (2017) argues that public participation constitutes the reaction by citizens precipitated by a sense of powerlessness on the part of the public as far as involvement in government-initiated decisions are concerned. Public participation as presently perceived is therefore a vital element and condition for policy making and consequent execution of programmes and projects as well as a foundational proviso for attracting programmes and projects (Aminuzzaman, 2018). Nonetheless, it is noted that the consultative nature necessary for public participation is not the same for all decentralized centers of power and communities (Opondo, 2017). In many instances public participation processes exhibit lack of administrative and political support and an induced fear for authority (Mutisya, 2018).

Globally, empirical literature on public participation shows that the concept and practice has come a long way since it began in the early 1960s, as part of government policy related to urban renewal projects in the United States and United Kingdom. In recent decades, in the USA and UK, public participation has come of age, appearing within many different planning and design contexts (Armitage, 1988). According to Armitage (1988) there is no longer need to begin arguing for its justification. It is now much more taken for granted, and the questions now are more "how" than "why." In countries like Italy and Spain, the concept still encounters skepticism, resistance, and refusal, but it is also met with support, interest, and encouragement (Aminuzzaman, 2018). In the two countries, new terms have entered the participation discourse, sustainability; social and environmental justice, with distinctions between procedural justice and distributive justice; empowerment; and local knowledge all of which are supportive of the principle of participation thus declaring participation a necessary requirement (Aminuzzaman, 2018). It should be noted however, that public participation in Spain and Italy is purposed more for development identification and implementation, leaving the other parts of the policy making process like formulation and evaluation (Aminuzzaman, 2018). Democratic countries like Canada have strongly infused public participation into their body politic. Canada began infusion of participation into public policy between the 1960s and 1970s to the extent that presently participation is the rule rather than the exception (Churchman, 2012). There are numerous successes of public participation in the policy process in Canada the notable one being the establishment of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy in 1996 which provided Canadians a platform through which they could both

participate and contribute to the country's foreign policy. Another example is the public participation rights conferred by the Environmental Protection Act, 1988 (CEPA) to allow Canadians to participate and make decisions regarding environmental protection (Churchman, 2012).

An analysis of Germany shows that legislation is sourced from court rulings, trade and industry associations, government regulations, interest groups, state, federal and local centers of power but equally important public discussions in open forums and media (Kingdon, 2010). Interest groups and the public are often invited to make their views on issues earmarked for legislation. The invited groups are representative and not arbitrary groups and have a duty to speak on behalf of a significant mass of social groups (Kingdon, 2010). Important to note is that the groupings are involved from the outset of the issues and not at the implementation stage where a sense of participation and ownership may be lost (Kingdon, 2010). 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 in 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 on implementation especially at the agenda building stage of the policy making process (Mazruki, 2015).

Public participation was adopted in Kenya following promulgation of 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)), as an object of devolution in governance (Article 174 (c) and (d)), in the governance and management of urban areas and cities (Article 184 (1) (c)), in county assembly procedures (Article 196 (1) (b)), in public finance accountability (Article 201(a)), and as a function and power vested on respective county governments (Fourth Schedule, Part 2 (14)). To facilitate enforcement of public participation at the county government level, the County Governments Act No. 17 (2012) was enacted and provides in Part VIII principles, values, modalities and platforms for participation. Specifically, the Makueni County Government developed the Makueni County Public Participation in Governance Bill (2014) as an act of the Makueni County Assembly to give effect to paragraph 14 of part 2 of the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and to establish modalities and platforms for public participation in the governance of the county, and for connected purposes. Upon the formation of the initial county government in 2013, public participation in Makueni County, was implemented as stipulated in the 2010 constitution (Mutisya, 2018). The public participation model adopted by the Makueni County Government entailed involvement of the public in project identification and prioritization, budgetary allocations to prioritized projects, oversight of project implementation through Project Management Committees (PMCs), and infusion of the public in procurement of goods and services through open tendering process (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2015). 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 whereas the county government played an accountability role for all its operations (Government of Makueni County, 2017). According to the Makueni County Government (2017), the Makueni County CIDP for the period 2013 to 2017 links with the Kenya Vision 2030, the Medium Term Plan and the Kenya Constitution (2010) in terms of emphasis on a highly participatory processes thus ensuring participatory development and capacities both at the wider county level and specifically at the

community level. The county government has thus rolled out public participation in Makueni with an aim of ensuring ownership of governance among the people, promoting social and economic development and bringing government services “closer” to the people. Despite the effort, there appears to be significant gaps on the linkage between public participation and the policy making process; whether public participation permeates all the stages in the policy making process and to what levels.

2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the Makueni County Government generally accepted framework for public participation, there is limited information on how that framework has impacted or been used for policy making process. There appears to be no proper and prescribed guidance on the modalities (how or when) applicable to conducting public participation. The government seems to determine its own approach to public participation hence not easy to evaluate whether, on any one particular issue, public participation should have been implemented but was not, or even whether the public participation that was done was up to the required reasonable standard. No entity or organ in the county government appears responsible for ensuring consistency in the use of public participation approaches. There is therefore likelihood of inconsistency and in some cases inadequate involvement of citizens in the county policy making process. Additionally, majority of the residents of Makueni County still seem to have limited knowledge of the opportunities and structures available in law for them to participate in the county policy making process. In order to enhance participation at the county level, there is no doubt, a need for clear mechanisms and structures for involvement.

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). Studies have also been conducted on effects of public participation on county development programs and established that due to inadequate publicity of public participation opportunities, constituents did not fully embrace it. It was particularly observed that priorities of development programs had involved the public on lower levels but had ceded ground to technocrats on higher levels, and that none of the sampled respondents participated in evaluation of development projects (Mutisya, 2018). Opondo (2017) additionally did a study on public participation in the budgeting process and observed that the level of public participation was low due to lack of a participation framework at the county level to promote budgeting process. All these studies have however not looked at how public participation influences policy making process, the awareness levels of the public to the options for public participation and the levels to which public participation has been enacted to engage and improve the policy making process. This research therefore sought to fill the significant research gap.

3. Objective of the Study

The study evaluates public participation in the policy making process in Makueni County.

The study considered the following specific objectives:

- (i) To assess the extent of awareness of the residents of Makueni of their democratic right and opportunities to participate in the policy making process.
- (ii) To analyze the levels of citizens involvement in policy making processes in Makueni County

- (iii) To establish the perception towards public participation in policy making process by residents and management in Makueni County
- (iv) To determine the barriers to public participation in policy making process by residents and management in Makueni County.

4. Theoretical Literature Review

This section addresses some existing theories on public participation in the policy making process and the degree to which the theories apply to the variables of the present study and its contribution to practice. The study is anchored on the following theories: Stakeholder Theory to deal with the place of the public in policy making process, Arnstein's Ladder to deal with the variables of public participation and the Multi Streams Model for policy making process variables.

4.1 Stakeholder's Theory

The Stakeholder theory was espoused by Oakley (2011) who defined stakeholders as either individuals in their own right as individuals and/or groups in their own right as groups, who either get harmed or benefit, or whose rights are respected or violated by actions that are corporate or governmental in nature. The groups or individuals include employees, shareholders, debtors, creditors, suppliers, customers, consumers and community members. Stakeholder theory is a foundational model used to demonstrate how a firm interrelates with its environment (Oakley, 2011). The theory further seeks to give firm management a broader view of rules, roles and responsibilities that look beyond profit making to consideration of claims and interests of groups outside the stake holding sphere. Patton (2018) asserts that stakeholder model involves all groups and individuals without abrogating any undue or added priority of one over the other with pre-set priorities. In other words, customers, consumers and community members also need to be considerably included in the matrix. This means that under the stakeholder theory, managers of projects must be aware of the fact that other stakeholders, including those considered external to the project like community members, are also important and must be included. The theory is therefore appropriate to this study as it deals with stakeholders (public) and emphasizes the importance of stakeholder participation in the policy making process which is both important and beneficial to their existence.

4.2 Arnstein's ladder of participation

Arnstein's ladder as espoused and propagated by Arnstein (1988) provides an added dimension on the motive of power plays by those in power in the determination of the level of public participation being practiced. Arnstein categorizes the rungs of the ladder into three, namely, non-participation, tokenism, and citizen power. Non-participation entails manipulation and therapy. Manipulation is characterized by placement of people in advisory committees or advisory boards as rubberstamps with a view of educating them towards ensuring their support for the aims of the power holders, thus making participation a public relations exercise. On the other hand, therapy entails involvement of citizens in planning where in the midst of extensive activity by the participants; mechanisms are put in place by the power holders to mould participants out of resistance rather than removing the conditions that bring rise to citizen resistance (Arnstein, 1988).

Tokenism, Arnstein (1988) has three approaches namely informing consultation and placation. Informing provides an initial step to legitimate public participation. However, this approach provides for a one way flow of information that is, from officials to citizens. Examples include news media, pamphlets and opinions. Whereas this may provide a legitimate step to participation, it would not be genuine unless combined with other forms of public participation such as surveys,

neighborhood meetings and public hearings. Placation provides citizens with a degree of influence and may include placement of a few handpicked members of the public on boards without being made accountable to the public. It may also entail receipt of advice from citizens on plans with the powerful holding the veto power over decisions made. The extent to which the public can be controlled under placation is dependent on the quality of professional support relied on in selecting their priorities and levels of organization in demanding for issues they have prioritized.

Citizen power, Arnstein(1988) comprises partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. Partnership involves redistribution of power through the mechanism of negotiation that allows the holders of power to share decision-making and even planning responsibilities with the citizens in a structure akin to planning committees, policy boards and conflict resolution committees. On the other hand, delegated power is the level of public participation in which citizens achieve dominant decision-making authority over a plan or program following deliberations between citizens and public officials. In this level, citizens have enough power to ensure accountability of the program by power holders and may resort to negotiation and bargaining rather than use of strong-arm tactics and other power plays in responding to pressure from citizens. This involves the removal of intermediaries between the source of funds and the citizen controlled organization.

In the case of Makueni County (2017), the government made a decision to involve the general public in decision making processes. This means that in any activity to be undertaken by the county government, a structured partnership and consultation must be entered into between the government and the public. Five forms of public participation were thus adopted by the county government, they include, holding of barazas to educate the public on issues at hand, the available options and alternative solutions so as to help the public buy into government ideas and ensure that once projects have been adopted, the county government gives feedback to the people. This is meant to ensure that people's needs are factored in the entire decision making process. This provides an opportunity for the county government to reason out with the public and pick the best alternative from the available options. The general public will thus be empowered to make the final decisions. This situation makes the Arnstein, (1988) theory applicable to this study. Additionally, using the theory as an underpinning framework, Makueni County Government has the onus of describing the extent to which public participation contributes to policy making process in the County.

4.3 Multi-Streams Model of Policy Making

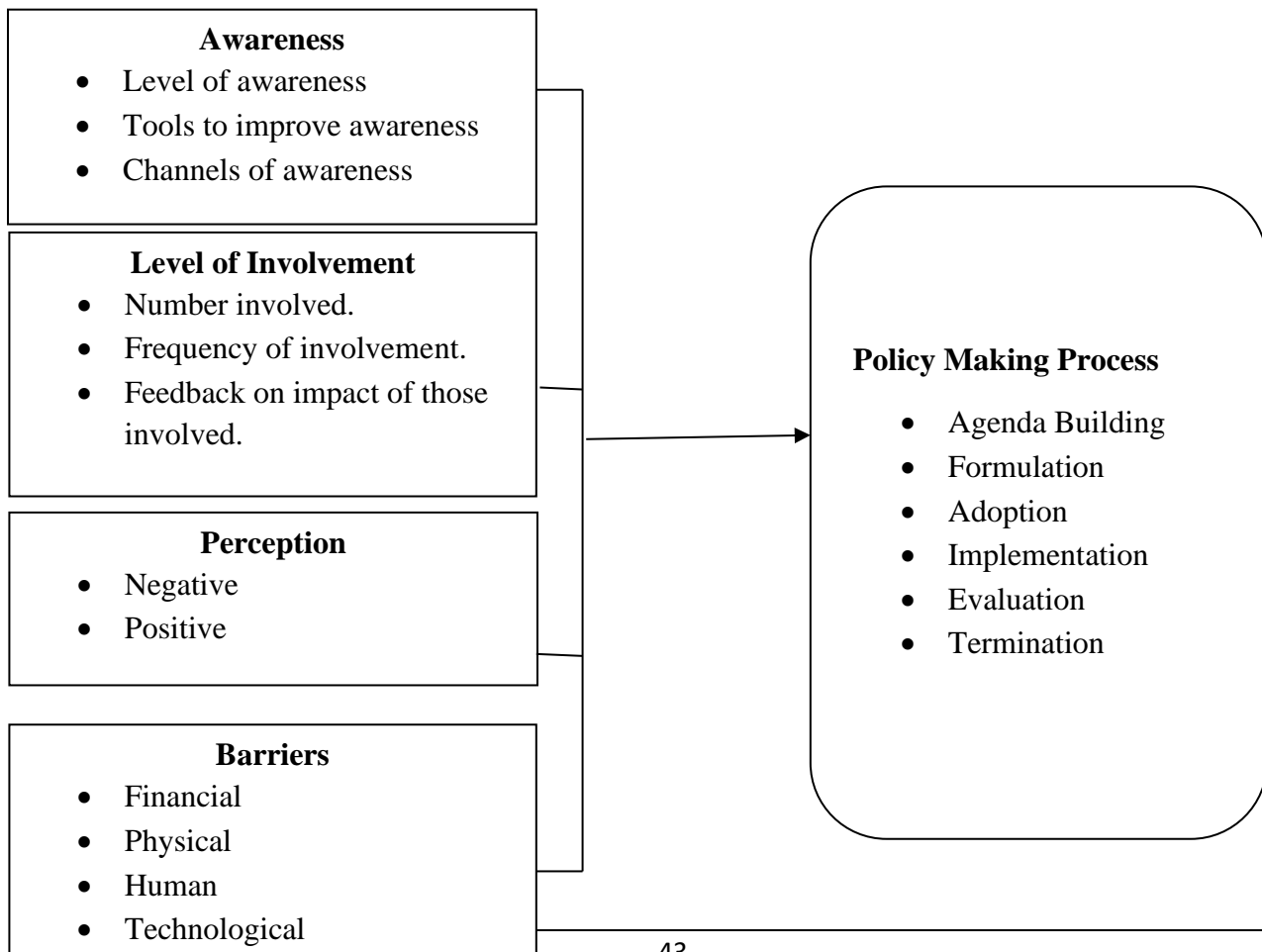
The multi-stream model is primarily concerned with giving an elaborate explanation about how public policy formulation happens. It specifically concerns itself with agenda setting and how it works by emphasizing the role the policy entrepreneur plays while rejecting both the linear and rational representations associated with the models by use of stages and sequences (Weible & Carter, 2017). Kingdon (2010), notes that agenda setting is inherently significantly competitive especially where different actors are participating in the process and particularly where policy, problem and policy streams converge. Problem stream highlights the difference between "problem" and "condition". A condition is a perceived social situation that does not necessarily trigger action in return. A condition becomes a problem when policy formulators believe they should act on it (Kingdon, 2010). Policy stream on the other hand happens minus any relation with the problem stream (Calmon and Marchesini, 2017). The policy communities create the project alternatives which are both cost-effective and feasible which are then disseminated to the entire

community in order to build idea acceptance (Kingdon, 2010). Finally, the political stream comprises of features like pressure groups, ideological issues, public opinion, results from election, and administration changes (Kingdon, 2010).

Organized political forces, government changes and the national mood are three key aspects that also characterize political stream. Mood provides an opportunity for idea generation as it offers a fertile ground (Capella, 2017). The three streams have their own dynamics and present relative independence. Sometimes they converge and generate opportunities of agenda changes, which Kingdon refers to as avenues of opportunity. These are transitory moments, i.e., ‘windows’ that can open and shut-in different times (Kingdon, 2010). However, for the three streams to occur, the figure of the policy entrepreneur is crucial, because the union between the streams depends very much on this player. Policy entrepreneurs act “uniting solutions and problems; projects and political moments; problems and political events” (Capella, 2017). They are usually experts in a particular issue and can communicate ideas from other individuals or groups. In addition, policy entrepreneurs may enjoy a position of authority within the decision-making process, which provides receptivity to their ideas (Capella, 2017).

5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework offers a diagrammatic illustration of the link between the independent variables of awareness, involvement, perception and barriers and the dependent variable of policy making process. The Independent Variables are noted to assumedly have either positive or negative influence on the dependent variable as shown in Figure 1 below.



Source: Author (2020)

6. Research Methodology

This study was conducted in Makueni County. Makueni County is one of the forty-seven counties in Kenya created through the constitution of Kenya, 2010. The county is situated on the map in South East of Kenya and covers 8.034.7km². It is surrounded by Machakos and Kajiado to the North and West respectively and Taita Taveta and Kitui to the south and east respectively. Further, 30 wards constitute areas within the six (6) sub-counties. Makueni County was selected as the study site because the researcher is an officer of the county government and having served as a legal counsel for seven years was interested in studying this topic particularly because, county governments provide an ideal forum for allowing participatory democracy to flourish as it is closest to the inhabitants. Considering that this data collects mostly primary data, the methodology was quantitative but more specifically descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is useful in examining and analyzing events and occurrences in a geographical area or unit of analysis in a situation that the researcher has no control over (Kothari, 2014).

The study targeted the 884,527 residents of Makueni and the County Public service Departments in Makueni County and 217 management staff and heads of departments working in the ten departments within the County (Makueni County Records, 2020). The sample size for the staff in the study was calculated according to the formula recommended by Yamane, (1967). To analyze the quantitative data from the questionnaires, descriptive statistical tools namely, counts and percentages were employed. To compute the data and actualize the descriptive statistical tools, the Social Package for Statistical science (SPSS) software version 24 was used. To analyze qualitative data from the focus group discussions, the data will be transcribed, coded and categorized in themes and analyzed using thematic analyses. The Regression analysis was also used inferentially.

7. Data Analysis Results

Regression analysis was done to test the study hypotheses to find out if they should be rejected or accepted. The study's hypotheses have quantitative scales that can be used to measure it via the responses given by the county management staff and analyzed descriptively. The results are as thus on Table 1 that has data on the R squared value and 2 that has result on the t ratios.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	The Durbin-Watson
1	.881 ^a	.777	.608	.178	2.590

a. Predictors: (Constant), Level of Awareness, Level of Involvement, Perception, Barriers

b. Dependent Variable: Policy Making Process

From table 1, the coefficient of determination R² value was 0.777 which implies that 77.7% of the variance existing in the dependent variable (Policy Making Process) was basically influenced by independent variables (Level of Awareness, Level of Involvement, Perception, Barriers).

Table 2: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	2.817	.381	.287	7.698	.000
Level of Awareness	.298	.079	.324	5.948	.000
Level of Involvement	.385	.064	.393	2.533	.002
Perception	.199	.068	.213	4.353	.000
Barriers	.168	.062	.193	3.997	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Policy Making Process

The t-ratios for the variables, Level of Awareness (5.948), Level of Involvement (2.533), Perception (4.353) and Barriers (3.997), all are important in explaining the policy making process since the coefficients are significant at 5% level of significance. Based on this, it can be concluded that policy making process was influenced by level of awareness. That level of involvement influenced policy making process; that the perception of residents influenced policy making process and finally, the barriers also influenced policy making process.

8. Conclusion

Based on the first objective, the level of awareness of county policy making process by residents was not high even though the county has sufficient tools to help improve citizen awareness of the county policy making process. However, it seems those tools and channels were not being used optimally to help improve citizen awareness of the county policy making process. It can thus be concluded that the residents were unaware of their democratic right and opportunities for participation in policy making process in Makueni County. Based on the results of the second objective, the level of citizen involvement in county policy making process was not high. In fact, the county did not engage many people (approximately 40%) in the county policy making process and more so the county did not engage citizens at least once a month in the county policy making process. It can thus be adequately concluded that there were low levels of citizens' involvement in policy making processes in Makueni County. Based on the results of the third objective, perception about public participation by residents is both negative for those who feel let down by the county management and positive for those who mainly feel hopeful that despite those challenges, things will get better in terms of public participation in policy making process in Makueni County. Based on the fourth and final objective, county management staff identified financial, physical resource, human resource barriers and technological barriers as having considerably negative impact on citizen participation in policy making process. However, what appears to be problematic for residents is poor management by the county which hinders public participation and dishonest county leaders who only use public participation to meet the legal requirements but not to have meaningful deliberations with residents that is built on mutual respect

9. Recommendations

Makueni County management should embark on renewed promotional strategies to make citizens aware of their democratic right and opportunities for participation in policy making process in Makueni County. They should do this by utilizing all available communication channels from

traditional to new media. Additionally, the awareness should be geared towards enlightening the citizens about the benefits and implications of being involved in the policy making process. Further, the citizens themselves should use every proactive mechanism for awareness such as seeking out information from the county and demanding participation. The Makueni County management should formulate a framework that stipulates the measures they would employ towards fully involving the citizens. The framework should have deliverables that include the breath of engagement in terms of representation, accessibility and awareness; the depth that include listening and dialogue, flexibility, deliberations, transparency and accountability and finally outcomes in terms of relevance, mutual respect, reciprocity and effectiveness. Additionally, the residents should use all legal and moral redress to demand full involvement. Further, the Makueni County management should be more transparent and accountable to help build positive perceptions about public participation by residents. Such perceptions can be built by providing full and transparent information about the goings on in the county. Finally, the Makueni County management should engage in robust resource mobilization of finances, physical resources, human resources and technological resources that advance public participation in policy making process. This can be done through strategic financial planning of monies received from the national government and the revenue they collect at the county government. On a policy front, parliament should amend existing public participation legislation to make it more responsive to the needs of citizens. The executive should on their part should robustly implement public participation processes going forward.

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