

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY
REDUCTION PROJECTS IN TAITA TAVETA COUNTY. A CASE OF
VILLAGE ENTERPRISE ORGANIZATION PROJECTS.**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

KU	Kenyatta University
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
EWS	Early Warning System
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
HHH	Household Head

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Community Participation: Everyone in the community is encouraged to voice their ideas, make decisions, and help put plans into action in Taita Taveta County, regardless of gender or socio-economic background.

Stakeholder Engagement: Active involvement of individuals or groups in the project, measured through the frequency and quality of interactions, and assessed via surveys on stakeholder perceptions and contributions.

Capacity Building: Initiatives to enhance the skills and knowledge of community members, operationalized by evaluating training programs through pre- and post-training assessments of participants' competencies.

Decision-Making Processes: Methods through which stakeholders make choices regarding project implementation, assessed by analyzing the inclusivity of decision-making structures through qualitative interviews and quantitative metrics.

Community Feedback Mechanisms: Systems established to solicit and respond to community input about project performance, operationalized by measuring the effectiveness of feedback channels and community awareness and satisfaction.

Project Sustainability: The continued viability and effectiveness of a project over time, evaluated through indicators such as project impact longevity, community satisfaction levels, and the extent to which objectives are met post-implementation.

ABSTRACT

Even after a number of poverty reduction initiatives had been implemented in Taita Taveta County, persistent poverty remained a significant issue, necessitating a closer examination of the variables affecting project sustainability. Community involvement was considered crucial for the efficacy and longevity of development interventions; however, its influence on the long-term viability of programs aimed at reducing poverty, particularly the Village Enterprise Organization (VEO) projects in Taita Taveta County, was still unclear. This study investigated the participation and sustainability of poverty reduction initiatives in Taita Taveta County, focusing specifically on the level of community involvement at various stages of the projects conducted by VEO. This study examined the critical factors influencing project sustainability, with a particular focus on stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and community feedback mechanisms. To guide the investigation, the study evaluated Treseder's Degree of Participation theory and Stakeholder theory. A correlational study design was employed to determine the degree of link between the identified variables. A sample population of 181 respondents was drawn from selected projects and external stakeholders in Taita Taveta County. The main instruments for data collection included interview guides and self-administered questionnaires. The findings revealed that active stakeholder involvement during the planning phase significantly enhances project outcomes and community satisfaction by fostering a sense of ownership and addressing local needs. Capacity building emerged as a pivotal determinant of sustainability, as targeted initiatives improved community skills and knowledge, directly contributing to project success. Conversely, decision-making processes displayed a complex relationship with sustainability, highlighting challenges in effectively engaging all stakeholders, particularly marginalized groups. Furthermore, effective community feedback mechanisms were identified as essential for promoting accountability and responsiveness, thereby strengthening project sustainability. The study recommends structured stakeholder engagement frameworks, tailored capacity-building programs, inclusive decision-making practices, and robust feedback systems to enhance project sustainability. Future research should focus on the long-term impacts of stakeholder engagement, the efficacy of capacity-building components, the dynamics of decision-making frameworks, and the role of technology in community feedback, while also considering comparative studies across various contexts to identify best practices

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Enhancing the lives and livelihoods of project recipients is the fundamental goal of all initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty. These could be social, intellectual, political, economic, or even environmental if organizations engage in certain projects. Most programs aimed at reducing poverty concentrate on the financial health of local communities. But because of the way societies are built and how the economy affects them, the projects eventually have an impact on people's social life, political decisions, and even environmental considerations (Khisa & Mutuku, 2022). Because of the aforementioned, it is crucial to involve society in the implementation of programs aimed at raising the success rate. In order to guarantee that all stakeholders are fully involved and have a sense of ownership over the projects, it is necessary to include them at every step of project implementation. This will improve the projects' sustainability and the lifetime of the measures aimed at reducing poverty.

Involving the end users or those who will be impacted by the project is a wide concept known as "community participation in project implementation," which aims to increase project success. A project gains legitimacy and the capacity to truly serve the needs of the intended beneficiaries when the community is involved from the initiative's conception to its completion (Globerson & Zwikael, 2006). Furthermore, by early detection and the development of remedial actions, the involvement of all shareholders and stakeholders helps mitigate any risks or dangers that may be connected to a project. Project sustainability varies by nation, depending on the type of project and the financing structure. When it comes to sustainability, private initiatives outperform government initiatives. This is a result of the finance strategies, project management

framework, and feasibility studies completed before project execution (Gwadoya, 2012).

Project sustainability is a crucial goal that the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 envisioned as directing project implementation policies in the European countries with an emphasis on improved sustainable economic growth, political integration, and the perpetual upholding of human dignity. According to a recent World Bank assessment, once funding is stopped, the majority of programs either fail or stop producing the expected benefits (World Bank Sustainability Review, 2021). This shows that most initiatives are merely using resources, which goes against the notion that they should eventually produce enough resources on their own to support themselves.

A key component of project success is the ability to develop precise changes that are well-planned, coordinated, and managed effectively and efficiently, thanks to the proactive participation of all stakeholders in recent years (Dakane & Mutuku, 2023). Silvius & associates (2016). Organizations now have to show accountability to all stakeholders regarding their sustainability plan, rather than only relying on financial performance to disclose to shareholders (Silvius & Schipper, 2016).

Within the African context, the majority of countries are impoverished states that work hard every day to try and climb the global development ladder and become part of the developed world. According to a 2021 study on sustainable development in Africa, while there has been progress in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, recent years have seen a slowdown in growth. This has been linked to the inability of those implementing poverty reduction initiatives to fully involve all stakeholders in order to guarantee the project's sustainability after funding has ended and to maintain accurate data that can always be utilized to promote change (Nobuo and Haoyu, 2022).

Furthermore, the focus on citizen or community representation continues to be a feature of many African nation-states' policies as well as contemporary international development initiatives. For this reason, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) made the concept of community participation extremely important in the newly independent South Africa and allowed the communities to define the issues affecting them. Development must be people-oriented to enhance the living standard of the oppressed and deprived people through development enfranchisement (African National Congress, 2014).

In East Africa, the governments and states have gone all out with the aim of accelerating economic growth and development. Much of that is done by engaging multilateral and global donors to fund different poverty reduction projects. A study in Tanzania indicated that for sustainability of projects to happen, it is critical to have government support and local acceptance (Flora Et Al, 2013). According to the World Bank Group Report of 2019, Productive social safety nets' programs, a program that heavily involves the beneficiaries, has posted great milestones in poverty reduction efforts due to inclusion of the beneficiaries in project implementation. However, the report also noted the reluctance of the government to support poverty reduction projects especially where the donors have conflicting interests with the government.

Locally, there has been multiple initiatives by the government, NGOs, International Donors and the local philanthropists to eradicate astute poverty. However, challenges such as technological problems, misappropriation and inadequacy of funds, gender inequalities, non-collaboration with the local society and hostility and non-cooperation from the government entities has rendered the programs to have minimal benefits (Misaro et al, 2014).

It's clear that community involvement is becoming a national concern, particularly in the less developed parts of the nation. Nevertheless, because the communities must get ready to take on this responsibility, it is difficult to implement the broad principle of involving them in Kenya. According to some academics, development initiatives will function best if they are supported by a well-thought-out plan for boosting involvement, which may even be incorporated into the program's design (Nyaranga et al., 2019). This is commonly seen as a major project delivery constraint and has been linked to subpar project performance. This is demonstrated by the fact that the community's ineffective participation is the root of the issue. Because of this, the researcher proactively asked for permission to carry out a study in order to determine the relationship between community participation and development project performance.

Currently, Kenya is rated as one of the poorer countries globally, with 32% of its population being recorded as inadequate, with the lowest 24% being identified as being in chronic poverty. While increasing citizen participation in Kenya has helped ensure more inclusive representation in local government planning, implementation, and decision-making, among other domains, it has not necessarily translated to a situation whereby rural areas within the country are experiencing less poverty (Kimani-Murage et al., 2015).

From the perspective of Taita Taveta County, there is a consensus that poverty has risen, coupled with a raised inequality. This is because people in this region are now employed in very low-paying jobs, hence resulting in increased cases of poverty. People in communities are excluded in decisions, planning, project implementation, and evaluations, which in turn has impacted the efficiency of services they receive, with a subsequent growth in poverty in the region (Namukasa & Atwijukire, 2018). Therefore,

this explains why citizens' participation can be important in eradicating poverty in Taita Taveta County and warrants the study.

1.1.1 Project Sustainability

Sustainability means the long-term, positive project influence on the community through the performance of the social, economic, and environmental project tasks (Gimenez et al., 2012). The application of sustainability within project management involves the incorporation of the 'people', 'planet' and 'profit' (3Ps) aspects of sustainability. Therefore, project sustainability in this context means supporting services at the community without adverse consequences after the particular intervention; financial, technical, and managerial support has been pulled out (Komujuni et al., 2013).

Project sustainability is about how the end users are willing and able to support and maintain the running of the project and the continual provision of the project services in the post-project phase; hence, it is very relevant to the long-term success development projects (Oakland, 2015; Aga et al., 2017). One of the most significant issues with development projects is their sustainability, especially in developing nations such as Kenya: numerous instances of unfinished and abandoned interventions can be found in rural regions, which could be due to low community engagement.

Community self-reliance is the extent to which a community can show that the local capacity is available to fulfil community needs in each project (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2017). There is a growing trend in adopting self-reliance as the essential modus operandi for community development.

Technological self-sufficiency means the capability of a community to manage equipment and maintain and efficiently utilize the technology deployed in project

execution. Technical sustainability focuses on the skills required, methods, and suitability of implementing the proposed solutions to the community's economic, social, and environmental aspects (Siller & Johnson, 2018). As Pace (2016) suggested, sustainability refers to employing easy-to-use technologies and training, utilizing locally sustainable technologies, and creating a labour force.

The Budget map is the capacity within the community to effectively make their budgets, fundraise resources, and be accountable for the resources they receive. Financial sustainability implies the capability for economic self-reliance such that project-planned activities do not end due to financial difficulties or are devoid of economic threats (Siller & Johnson, 2018). Economic sustainability also helps to decrease the dependence on the household (USAID, 2021). Managerial self-reliance, therefore, makes it possible for the community to be in a position to identify, plan, execute, monitor, review and direct development projects even in the absence of the project implementors. Development agencies should develop structures for implementing and managing the project. It assists in efficiently managing the project's activities without needing outside assistance (Salla, 2014).

1.1.2 Community Participation

Community participation refers to practices that enable local communities to share, access relevant information, and significantly contribute to project decisions, thereby building community capacity (Mulwa, 2010; Gichimi & Mutuku, 2022). A bottom-up strategy allows the local community to express their views according to their plans and expectations. The level of community participation can be classified as active, quasi, or passive. Passive participation involves directing people to execute pre-determined decisions, while quasi participation entails consultations with the community on what actions to take. In contrast, active participation means the community is fully involved

in project design, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and control (Isidiho & Sabran, 2016).

The literature reveals conflicting information on the most effective level of community participation for project sustainability. Effective community capacity development investments include conscious efforts by project agencies to empower communities to respond to their development needs sustainably. This involves developing both human and capital assets, promoting self-reliance, and enhancing sustainability prospects. Community capacity development encompasses actions aimed at enhancing the strengths and resources of communities or organizations to deliver services effectively (Hope Sr, 2011). Resources are necessary to improve project management competency, train new staff, facilitate networking, enhance information sharing, and empower groups.

In the context of this study, community participation indicators include stakeholder engagement in planning, capacity building, decision-making processes, and community feedback mechanisms. Stakeholder engagement in planning allows community members to participate actively in the decision-making processes from the outset, ensuring that their views and needs are considered. Capacity building focuses on enhancing the skills and knowledge of community members, which is crucial for the long-term sustainability of projects. Decision-making processes are essential for fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, while effective community feedback mechanisms provide avenues for ongoing dialogue, ensuring that community concerns are addressed throughout the project lifecycle.

The literature has primarily focused on human resource investment, with less emphasis on community infrastructure investment. This research project addresses both

community infrastructure and human investment aspects. Community organizing can be defined as empowering individuals or groups by assessing their complementary needs and opportunities, enabling them to take necessary action. Ensuring equity and equal involvement of all groups, including gender and vulnerable marginalized groups (VMGs), guarantees that projects meet diverse community needs, thereby increasing ownership and support (Christens & Speer, 2015).

This approach values the knowledge, technical skills, connections, capacity, and potential of individuals in the community (Stewart, Lohar, & Higgins, 2011). The partnership enables communities to adopt strategies that allow them to become self-reliant rather than merely beneficiaries of support. Strengthening the link between project donors and local institutional structures is vital, as these entities will adapt project activities after the phase-out. Previous literature has emphasized the involvement of marginalized groups, such as women, in project development while often neglecting specialized individuals in the community who could enhance project functionality post-exit. This research also focuses on creating resource interdependency relationships and partnerships with local organizations to promote sustainability.

1.1.3 Poverty Reduction Projects in Taita Taveta County

Taita Taveta County, located in the coastal region of Kenya, has long grappled with endemic poverty despite being endowed with natural resources and potential for economic development (Munyembo, 2014). The county is characterized by a predominantly rural population, with a significant proportion living below the poverty line and facing various socio-economic challenges. Poverty in Taita Taveta County is often compounded by factors such as limited access to basic services, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and high unemployment rates, particularly amongst the youth (Makwata, 2022). In response to these challenges, various poverty

reduction projects have been initiated in Taita Taveta County over the years, with the aim of improving livelihoods, enhancing socio-economic development, and empowering local communities. These projects encompass a wide range of interventions, including microfinance initiatives, agricultural development programs, vocational training, and community-based enterprises, among others.

One notable approach to poverty reduction in Taita Taveta County is the establishment of Village Enterprise Organizations (VEOs). VEOs are community-driven initiatives that aim to empower local residents through the formation of self-help groups or cooperatives, which engage in income-generating activities and community development projects. These projects often target vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and marginalized communities, seeking to build their capacity, promote entrepreneurship, and foster sustainable livelihoods (Magogo, 2017).

The fact that poverty is still prevalent in Taita Taveta County even after implementing several poverty reduction projects, indicates the limitations of the existing literature. At the same time, some academic ambitions may be left behind. The problem is that there is no one to participate in the subsequent work of a project initiated by scientists and engineers, and the need for community support has been felt only after some successes were achieved, along with the problems resulting from their absence. Nevertheless, the specifics of community participation and its role in determining project longevity are still somewhat vague. Thus, this research filled this gap by comparing the levels of community participation in the projects to determine the sustainability of poverty projects in Taita Taveta County through a case study of Village Enterprise Organization poverty reduction projects.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Concerns about Taita Taveta County's adoption of participation approaches to implement development programs that were intended to be relevant, appropriate, efficient, effective, and sustainable grew in the recent past as a means of improving the quality of life for the local population. The sources claimed that involving beneficiaries (the community) in development projects from the outset increased the programs' return on investment (Gnych et al., 2020). Although the welfare monitoring surveys indicated a rise in poverty levels, the government and development actors nevertheless worked to strengthen social, political, and economic well-being in the development projects that had been launched in Taita Taveta County. This indicated that the current development initiatives were underperforming and had a short useful life when they were completed.

Despite the abundance of interest and research on participation in various settings, there was insufficient information on community engagement in poverty reduction programs concerning the Taita Taveta community projects. Organizations and individuals had not yet conducted a thorough investigation and assessment of the effects of community involvement on poverty alleviation programs in Taita Taveta. In light of this, further research was required to examine the community's involvement in and role in poverty reduction initiatives, with a particular emphasis on the Village Enterprise Organization's community development initiatives in Taita Taveta.

Despite the plethora of interest and research on participation in many settings, there remained insufficient information on community participation in poverty reduction projects regarding the Taita Taveta community projects. To date, organizations and individuals had yet to comprehensively investigate and evaluate the impacts of

community participation on poverty alleviation initiatives in Taita Taveta. Given this, there was a need for further research on the role and involvement of the community in poverty reduction projects, focusing on the Village Enterprise Organization's community development projects in Taita Taveta.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

To explore influence of community participation on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i) To assess the effect of stakeholder engagement in planning on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.
- ii) to Determine the effect of capacity building on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.
- iii). To assess the effect of participation in decision-making on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.
- Iv). To evaluate the effect of community feedback mechanisms on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of stakeholder engagement in planning on the sustainability of poverty reduction projects implemented by the Village Enterprise Organization (VEO) in Taita Taveta County?
- ii. How does capacity building influence the sustainability of poverty reduction projects conducted by the Village Enterprise Organization (VEO) in Taita Taveta County?
- iii. What is the impact of participation in decision-making on the sustainability of poverty reduction projects carried out by the Village Enterprise Organization (VEO) in Taita Taveta County?
- iv. How do community feedback mechanisms affect the sustainability of poverty reduction projects implemented by the Village Enterprise Organization (VEO) in Taita Taveta County?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds profound significance on various fronts. Firstly, it sheds light on the effectiveness of community involvement in poverty alleviation initiatives, deeply analyzing the role local residents play in supporting sustainability and success of such projects. By examining the level of engagement, contribution, and ownership within the community, the study provides insights into the factors that influence the longevity and impact of poverty reduction efforts. Consequently, the study will enable the leadership of Village enterprise organization focus effort on matters concerning community engagement in their projects to optimize poverty reduction.

Secondly, the research contributes to the understanding of the dynamics between external interventions and local empowerment strategies in impoverished regions. By

analyzing the Village Enterprise Organization projects within the context of Taita Taveta County, it elucidates the interplay between external aid and indigenous capacities, highlighting the importance of fostering self-reliance and resilience within communities to ensure the lasting efficacy of poverty alleviation endeavors. In view of the foregoing, the research will help in capacity building of local communities to foster self-support for sustainability.

This study also sheds light on the best practices for best results in community involvement in implementation of projects. This in turn will help project owners to enhance and improve their project management techniques and further improve on success of their projects.

The study findings have implications on policy formulation and implementation, particularly in designing more inclusive and participatory approaches to development. By identifying best practices and challenges in community-driven poverty reduction initiatives, policymakers can tailor interventions to better align with local needs, preferences, and capacities, thus enhancing their effectiveness and sustainability over time.

In addition, the study contributes to the body of knowledge on sustainable development by offering empirical evidence on the nexus between community participation and project sustainability. By examining the long-term outcomes and impacts of the Village Enterprise Organization projects, it enriches our understanding of the pathways through which community engagement fosters resilience, social capital, and economic empowerment, thereby informing future research and practice in poverty reduction and sustainable development efforts.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Taita Taveta County, Kenya, primarily at the Village Enterprise Organization (VEO) projects aimed at reducing poverty. The target respondents were beneficiaries of various poverty reduction programs carried out by VEO and several employees employed by the Village Enterprise Organization in Taita Taveta County. The study assessed the level of community participation, determined the various methods used in stakeholder engagement in planning, evaluated the challenges encountered in capacity building, and assessed the impact of participation in decision-making processes and community feedback mechanisms on the implementation of various Village Enterprise projects in Taita Taveta County.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study provided significant insights into the dynamics of community engagement and the long-term viability of poverty alleviation efforts. However, the study's dependence on a particular geographical area, namely Taita Taveta County, limited the applicability of its findings to a broader context. The distinct socio-economic and cultural circumstances of this county did not accurately represent the difficulties and opportunities encountered by populations in other areas. Hence, it was important to exercise caution when generalizing the findings to wider contexts, as the efficacy of involving the community in poverty alleviation initiatives may have differed in other environments.

Furthermore, the study's methodology and data collection approaches included biases that compromised the credibility of its conclusions. If the sampling method favored participants from successful projects or those with positive experiences, it biased the results towards excessively optimistic evaluations of community participation and

project viability. Similarly, reliance on self-reported data obtained through interviews or surveys was vulnerable to respondent bias, wherein individuals may have offered socially desirable responses or exaggerated their level of involvement.

In addition, the study's temporal span restricted its capacity to capture the long-term effects and development of poverty reduction initiatives. By limiting its scope to a particular time period, the study may have failed to consider significant patterns or shifts in community involvement and the long-term viability of projects, resulting in an inadequate assessment of their effectiveness. Additionally, the study may have overlooked confounding variables or external factors that could impact the correlation between community participation and project viability. The analysis may not have completely considered the intricate interactions between community involvement and factors such as government regulations, foreign finance, market dynamics, and environmental circumstances, which could have resulted in incorrect conclusions.

Research involving human subjects, particularly in vulnerable groups, prioritized ethical considerations such as informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality. It was essential to prioritize the safeguarding of participants' rights and interests in order to maintain the integrity and credibility of the study.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five main chapters, each addressing different aspects of the research on community participation and the sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County, focusing on the Village Enterprise Organization (VEO) projects. Chapter One provides an overview of the research problem, objectives, significance, scope, limitations, and the organization of the study, setting the foundation for understanding the role of community participation in poverty reduction initiatives.

Chapter Two reviews existing literature related to community participation, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and community feedback mechanisms, examining theoretical frameworks relevant to the study, discussing previous research findings, and identifying gaps in the literature that this study aims to address. Chapter Three outlines the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures used in the study, explaining how the research questions and objectives were addressed through the chosen methodology. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study, including an analysis of the data collected from the respondents, assessing the effects of stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and community feedback mechanisms on the sustainability of poverty reduction projects. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the implications of the findings, drawing conclusions based on the research objectives, offering recommendations for enhancing community participation in poverty reduction projects, and suggesting areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature review concerning the study on community participation and sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. They were used among the projects under the village enterprise organization. Using the research objectives, corresponding review themes have been developed and informed in the empirical review section. The themes are as follows: level and effectiveness of community participation in Village Enterprise Organization (VEO), community participation in poverty reduction projects by the Village Enterprise Organization, and challenges faced by the Village Enterprise Organization VEO and the community in poverty reduction projects. This empirical literature is, however, preceded by the theoretical review and the conceptual framework to achieve a conceptual clarification and rich understanding of the study on community participation and sustainability for poverty reduction projects. Categorization of variable relationships according to the research theoretical framework is utilized in formulating the conceptual framework and moving the empirical literature review.

2. 2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory relates business with all the individuals or groups who are interested in the companies or organizations, including their competitors, customers, employees, suppliers, creditors, communities, political parties, public bureaus, labor unions, and trade associations. Thus, understanding these connections is crucial when striving to understand the functioning of a particular company. Meanwhile, these

relationships are maintained and built by the CEO or the entrepreneur to benefit the project and create value (Edward et al., 2010).

I find stakeholder theory to be beneficial in that it is not exclusively an economic theory; it also considers ethical implications. Employers have observed that the social-economic status of the firm has improved in society, and the general well-being of their employees has increased as a result of their increased satisfaction with their work environment. In accordance with stakeholder theory, a business can foster competition within the operations of others, thereby enhancing their development and the positive impact on their stakeholders (Pernille et al., 2006).

Political philosopher Charles Blattberg challenges stakeholder theory by asserting that it is impossible to satisfy all demands, as a stakeholder is any individual or group that can either have an impact on or be impacted by the organization. The continual conflict that would result if one or more stakeholders yielded to the more dominant 16 stakeholders would negate the advantages of the stakeholders' concept (Pernille et al., 2006).

Khazaei et al. (2005) opine that the conventional proactive stakeholder map of an organization-oriented approach "misses the affected stakeholders in favor of influential ones," citing Roloff (2008). They also highlighted "issue-focused" stakeholder management, which involves the formation of a group of stakeholders who are equally relevant in order to address a specific issue. The theory is pertinent to the research objective of investigating the relationships between the various variables due to the aforementioned attributes.

Stakeholder theory promotes an inclusive approach to project analysis. It emphasizes the importance of considering the interests and perspectives of all relevant stakeholders

involved in a project. In the context of community participation, this theory recognizes that multiple stakeholders, including local communities, government bodies, NGOs, and project implementers, have a stake in the success of poverty reduction projects. By considering the diverse needs and expectations of these stakeholders, Stakeholder theory will encourages a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the dynamics of community participation.

In addition to that, poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County are complex and multifaceted endeavours. They involve various social, economic, and environmental factors that interact with each other. Stakeholder theory provides a holistic perspective by analysing the relationships and interactions among different stakeholders. This approach helps researchers gain a nuanced understanding of the roles, interests, and power dynamics among stakeholders involved in the Village Enterprise Organization projects. By examining these relationships, the theory allows for a deeper exploration of how stakeholders' involvement, engagement, and collaboration contribute to the long-term success of poverty reduction initiatives.

2.3 Review of Related Literature

2.3.1 Stakeholder Engagement in Planning on Sustainability of Projects

A study by Kumar and Singh (2021) explored stakeholder engagement for sustainable development through a case study of urban infrastructure projects in India. This research utilized a qualitative methodology, conducting in-depth interviews with key stakeholders involved in urban infrastructure projects across three major cities. The findings indicated that effective stakeholder engagement significantly enhanced the sustainability of these projects, leading to improved project outcomes and community satisfaction. The study highlighted that early engagement of stakeholders in the planning process resulted in better identification of local needs and increased ownership

among community members. However, it also identified a research gap in understanding how the lack of engagement from marginalized communities affects project sustainability.

Martinez and Gonzalez (2022) conducted a study on the role of stakeholder participation in project planning and its impact on sustainable agricultural practices. This research employed a mixed-methods approach, surveying 150 stakeholders involved in agricultural projects in rural Spain and complemented by focus group discussions. The results revealed that stakeholder participation in the planning phase led to the adoption of more sustainable agricultural practices, with stakeholders reporting higher levels of satisfaction and commitment to project goals. Despite the positive outcomes, the study pointed out a gap in examining the long-term effects of stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of agricultural practices over time.

Chen (2023) investigated integrating stakeholder engagement in the planning phase and its effects on sustainability outcomes in renewable energy projects. This quantitative study analyzed data from 200 renewable energy projects across various regions in China. Using regression analysis, the research found a strong correlation between stakeholder engagement during the planning phase and the sustainability outcomes of these projects. Projects that involved local communities in decision-making processes experienced lower opposition and enhanced environmental benefits. However, the study noted a gap in exploring the specific engagement strategies that lead to the most significant sustainability impacts.

A study by Adama and Tengeh (2023) examined stakeholder engagement in infrastructure development as a pathway to sustainability in Sub-Saharan Africa. This research employed a case study methodology, assessing three infrastructure projects in

different Sub-Saharan African countries. The findings highlighted that meaningful stakeholder engagement facilitated knowledge sharing and capacity building, which are critical for sustainable development. The study also found that projects lacking structured engagement frameworks faced significant challenges in achieving sustainability goals. However, it identified a gap in understanding the role of technology in enhancing stakeholder engagement in these projects.

Ndiaye (2024) assessed stakeholder engagement in planning for sustainable urban development through lessons from West African cities. Using a comparative analysis approach, this study evaluated stakeholder engagement practices in urban development projects across four West African cities. The research revealed that inclusive stakeholder engagement practices contributed to more sustainable urban development outcomes, including improved social cohesion and environmental management. However, the study pointed out a significant gap in the literature regarding the impact of cultural differences on stakeholder engagement effectiveness in urban planning contexts.

2.3.2 Capacity Building and Sustainability of Projects

A study by Nascimento and Silva (2021) investigated the impact of capacity building on the sustainability of community development projects in Brazil. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted surveys and interviews with stakeholders involved in various community projects. The findings revealed that targeted capacity-building programs significantly enhanced the skills and knowledge of community members, which in turn led to improved project outcomes and sustainability. However, the study identified a research gap concerning the long-term effects of capacity building on project sustainability beyond the immediate post-training phase.

Wang and Zhang (2022) conducted a study on capacity building for sustainable development in urban infrastructure projects in China. This research employed a quantitative methodology, analyzing data from 150 infrastructure projects that included capacity-building initiatives. The results demonstrated a strong correlation between effective capacity building and the sustainability of urban projects, highlighting that projects with comprehensive training programs showed higher levels of community engagement and better environmental outcomes. Despite these findings, the study noted a gap in understanding the specific components of capacity-building programs that are most effective for different types of projects.

A study by Romero *et al.*, (2023) examined the role of capacity building in enhancing the sustainability of agricultural projects in Colombia. Utilizing a case study methodology, the researchers focused on several agricultural initiatives and conducted in-depth interviews with participants. The findings indicated that capacity-building efforts, such as training in sustainable farming practices, directly contributed to increased productivity and sustainability among farmers. Nonetheless, the study pointed out a research gap related to the scalability of these capacity-building initiatives and their adaptability to different agricultural contexts.

Patel and Kumar (2023) explored the effects of capacity building on the sustainability of non-governmental organization (NGO) projects in India. Using a qualitative methodology, the researchers gathered data through focus group discussions and interviews with NGO staff and beneficiaries. The results highlighted that well-designed capacity-building interventions significantly improved the operational efficiency of NGOs, leading to enhanced project sustainability and community impact. However, the study identified a gap in examining the barriers to effective capacity building within NGOs and the varying capacities among different organizations.

A study by Mensah *et al.*, (2024) assessed the impact of capacity-building programs on sustainability outcomes in health projects in Ghana. Employing a longitudinal approach, the researchers analyzed data from health projects over three years, focusing on the training and capacity-building efforts provided to local health workers. The findings revealed that sustained capacity-building initiatives resulted in improved health outcomes and project sustainability, as local health workers became more competent in delivering services. However, the study acknowledged a gap in understanding the influence of community involvement in capacity-building efforts and its effect on long-term sustainability.

2.3.3 Participation in Decision Making and Project Sustainability

A study by Thomas and Green (2021) explored the influence of stakeholder participation in decision-making on the sustainability of infrastructure projects in the United States. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted surveys and interviews with stakeholders involved in various infrastructure initiatives. The findings revealed that active participation in decision-making processes led to enhanced project sustainability, as stakeholders felt more invested in the outcomes. The study identified a research gap concerning the long-term impacts of participatory decision-making on sustainability metrics, suggesting a need for further investigation into how sustained participation affects project success over time.

Garcia and Martinez (2022) examined the role of community involvement in decision-making for sustainable urban development in Mexico. Utilizing a case study methodology, they analyzed three urban development projects that emphasized community participation. The results indicated that when communities were actively involved in decision-making, projects were more likely to address local needs and achieve sustainable outcomes. However, the study highlighted a gap in understanding

the challenges communities face when trying to engage in decision-making processes, particularly in contexts where power dynamics and socio-economic factors may hinder effective participation.

A study conducted by Okafor and Nwankwo (2023) investigated participatory decision-making in the context of environmental conservation projects in Nigeria. The researchers employed a qualitative methodology, conducting focus group discussions and interviews with project stakeholders. The findings showed that participatory decision-making improved project sustainability by fostering collaboration and building trust among stakeholders. Nonetheless, the study noted a research gap regarding the specific participatory techniques that are most effective in different cultural contexts, suggesting that more empirical evidence is needed to tailor decision-making processes to local circumstances.

Kim and Lee (2023) assessed the impact of stakeholder engagement in decision-making on the sustainability of renewable energy projects in South Korea. Using a quantitative approach, the researchers analyzed survey data from various stakeholders involved in renewable energy initiatives. Their findings demonstrated a significant positive correlation between stakeholder engagement in decision-making and project sustainability, with engaged stakeholders reporting higher satisfaction levels and commitment to project goals. However, the study pointed out a gap in exploring the barriers to effective engagement in decision-making processes, particularly for marginalized groups who may be excluded from discussions.

Patel and Singh (2024) examined the relationship between participatory decision-making and the sustainability of agricultural development projects in India. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with in-depth interviews of

farmers and project coordinators. The findings revealed that when farmers were included in the decision-making process, projects were more likely to be successful and sustainable. However, the research highlighted a gap in understanding how different factors, such as gender and socio-economic status, influence participation in decision-making, suggesting that future studies should explore these dynamics to enhance participatory practices in agricultural projects.

2.3.4 Community Feedback Mechanisms and Project Sustainability

A study by Mensah and Agyemang (2021) investigated the role of community feedback mechanisms in enhancing project sustainability in Ghana. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted surveys and interviews with community members and project managers involved in various development initiatives. The findings indicated that effective feedback mechanisms allowed communities to express their concerns and suggestions, leading to improved project outcomes and higher satisfaction rates. However, the study identified a research gap regarding the scalability of these feedback mechanisms and their adaptability to different project contexts.

Wang and Li (2022) conducted a study on the impact of community feedback mechanisms on the sustainability of public health projects in China. This research employed a quantitative methodology, analyzing data from health projects that incorporated community feedback systems. The results demonstrated a positive correlation between the implementation of feedback mechanisms and project sustainability, as communities felt more engaged and invested in the health initiatives. Despite these findings, the study noted a gap in understanding the specific characteristics of effective feedback systems and how they vary across different regions and health contexts.

A study by Okafor *et al.*, (2023) examined the effectiveness of community feedback mechanisms in agricultural projects in Nigeria. Using a qualitative methodology, the researchers conducted focus group discussions and interviews with farmers and agricultural extension workers. The findings revealed that timely and accessible feedback systems enabled farmers to communicate their needs and challenges, resulting in more responsive project interventions. Nonetheless, the study pointed out a research gap in exploring the long-term impacts of community feedback on project sustainability and the mechanisms that ensure continuous engagement.

Patel and Singh (2024) explored the influence of community feedback mechanisms on the sustainability of infrastructure projects in India. This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with interviews of community members and project stakeholders. The findings highlighted that feedback mechanisms significantly contributed to project sustainability by enhancing accountability and transparency in decision-making. However, the researchers identified a gap in examining how socio-economic factors influence community participation in feedback mechanisms, suggesting that future studies should address these disparities.

A study by Romero and Gonzalez (2024) investigated the role of community feedback mechanisms in disaster response projects in Latin America. Employing a case study methodology, the researchers analyzed several disaster response initiatives and conducted interviews with community members and project managers. The findings revealed that effective feedback systems facilitated better communication between communities and project teams, leading to more successful disaster recovery efforts. However, the study acknowledged a research gap concerning the integration of technology in feedback mechanisms and its potential impact on project sustainability.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps

Table 2.1: Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps

Researcher and Year	Title of the Research	Major Findings	Gaps Identified	Gaps to be Filled by Proposed Study
Kumar and Singh (2021)	Stakeholder Engagement for Sustainable Development in Urban Infrastructure Projects in India	Effective stakeholder engagement enhances sustainability, improved project outcomes, and community satisfaction.	Lack of understanding of how marginalized communities' lack of engagement affects project sustainability.	The proposed study will address the gap by focusing on how stakeholder engagement, especially marginalized communities, impacts the sustainability of public projects in Kenya.
Martinez and Gonzalez (2022)	Stakeholder Participation in Project Planning and Its Impact on Sustainable Agricultural Practices	Stakeholder participation in planning phase leads to more sustainable agricultural practices and higher satisfaction.	Gap in examining long-term effects of stakeholder engagement on sustainability of agricultural practices over time.	The proposed study will explore how long-term stakeholder engagement affects project sustainability beyond the initial planning phase in various sectors.
Chen (2023)	Stakeholder Engagement in Planning Phase and Sustainability Outcomes in Renewable Energy Projects	Strong correlation between stakeholder engagement and sustainability outcomes, including lower opposition.	Lack of exploration into specific engagement strategies that yield the most significant sustainability impacts.	The proposed study will investigate different stakeholder engagement strategies and their effects on sustainability, particularly in public sector projects in Kenya.
Adama and Tengeh (2023)	Stakeholder Engagement in Infrastructure Development in	Meaningful engagement promotes knowledge sharing and	Lack of structured engagement frameworks hinders	The study will focus on how structured engagement frameworks and

Researcher and Year	Title of the Research	Major Findings	Gaps Identified	Gaps to be Filled by Proposed Study
	Sub-Saharan Africa	capacity building for sustainability.	sustainability; missing role of technology in enhancing engagement.	technology integration enhance sustainability in infrastructure projects in Kenya.
Ndiaye (2024)	Stakeholder Engagement in Planning for Sustainable Urban Development in West African Cities	Inclusive stakeholder engagement improves social cohesion and environmental management.	Gap in understanding the impact of cultural differences on stakeholder engagement effectiveness in urban planning.	The proposed study will explore the cultural dimensions of stakeholder engagement and how they impact sustainability in urban projects in Kenya.
Nascimento and Silva (2021)	Capacity Building and Sustainability of Community Development Projects in Brazil	Targeted capacity building enhances community skills, leading to improved project outcomes.	Research gap in understanding the long-term effects of capacity building on project sustainability beyond the immediate post-training phase.	The proposed study will examine the long-term impact of capacity-building initiatives on project sustainability, particularly in Kenyan public sector projects.
Wang and Zhang (2022)	Capacity Building for Sustainable Development in Urban Infrastructure Projects in China	Strong correlation between capacity building and sustainability, with higher community engagement and better outcomes.	Unclear which components of capacity building are most effective for different project types.	The proposed study will identify the most effective components of capacity-building initiatives for different sectors, focusing on sustainability in Kenyan projects.
Romero et al. (2023)	Capacity Building for Agricultural Sustainability in Colombia	Training in sustainable farming practices improves productivity and	Lack of exploration on the scalability of capacity-building initiatives across	The proposed study will address scalability challenges and adaptability of capacity-building

Researcher and Year	Title of the Research	Major Findings	Gaps Identified	Gaps to be Filled by Proposed Study
		project sustainability.	different agricultural contexts.	initiatives in the Kenyan agricultural sector.
Patel and Kumar (2023)	Capacity Building for NGO Project Sustainability in India	Well-designed capacity-building interventions improve operational efficiency and sustainability.	Gap in examining barriers to effective capacity building and varying capacities among different NGOs.	The proposed study will explore capacity-building barriers and how they affect sustainability across public and NGO projects in Kenya.
Mensah et al. (2024)	Capacity-Building Programs and Sustainability in Health Projects in Ghana	Sustained capacity-building initiatives improve health outcomes and project sustainability.	Lack of understanding of the role of community involvement in capacity-building efforts.	The proposed study will examine the role of community involvement in capacity-building programs and their effect on long-term sustainability in public projects in Kenya.
Thomas and Green (2021)	Stakeholder Participation in Decision-Making and Infrastructure Project Sustainability in the U.S.	Active participation in decision-making enhances sustainability and stakeholder investment in outcomes.	Gap in understanding the long-term impacts of participatory decision-making on sustainability metrics.	The proposed study will explore the long-term effects of participatory decision-making on the sustainability of public infrastructure projects in Kenya.
Garcia and Martinez (2022)	Community Involvement in Decision-Making for Sustainable Urban Development in Mexico	Active community involvement leads to addressing local and achieving	Lack of understanding of the challenges faced by communities in engaging with decision-making processes,	The proposed study will investigate the challenges communities face when engaging in decision-making processes, with a

Researcher and Year	Title of the Research	Major Findings	Gaps Identified	Gaps to be Filled by Proposed Study
		sustainable outcomes.	especially in contexts of power dynamics and socio-economic factors.	focus on power dynamics and socio-economic influences in Kenya.
Okafor and Nwankwo (2023)	Participatory Decision-Making in Environmental Conservation Projects in Nigeria	Participatory decision-making fosters collaboration and improves sustainability.	Lack of exploration of the most effective participatory techniques across different cultural contexts.	The proposed study will explore effective participatory decision-making techniques in Kenya, tailored to specific cultural and socio-economic contexts.
Kim and Lee (2023)	Stakeholder Engagement in Decision-Making for Renewable Energy Projects in South Korea	Positive correlation between stakeholder engagement in decision-making and project sustainability.	Lack of exploration of barriers to effective engagement, particularly for marginalized groups.	The proposed study will investigate the barriers to effective stakeholder engagement, focusing on marginalized groups and their influence on project sustainability in Kenyan public sector projects.
Patel and Singh (2024)	Participatory Decision-Making and Sustainability of Agricultural Development Projects in India	Inclusion of farmers in decision-making leads to more successful and sustainable agricultural projects.	Gap in understanding how gender and socio-economic status influence participation in decision-making.	The proposed study will explore how gender and socio-economic factors influence participatory decision-making in Kenyan public sector projects.
Mensah and Agyemang (2021)	Community Feedback Mechanisms and Project	Effective feedback mechanisms lead to improved	Gap in understanding the scalability of feedback	The proposed study will explore the scalability and adaptability

Researcher and Year	Title of the Research	Major Findings	Gaps Identified	Gaps to be Filled by Proposed Study
	Sustainability in Ghana	project outcomes and higher satisfaction rates.	mechanisms across different project contexts.	of community feedback mechanisms in public infrastructure projects in Kenya.
Wang and Li (2022)	Impact of Community Feedback Mechanisms on Public Health Project Sustainability in China	Positive correlation between feedback mechanisms and sustainability as communities feel more engaged.	Lack of understanding of the specific characteristics of effective feedback systems across different health contexts.	The proposed study will examine the characteristics of effective feedback systems in Kenyan public sector projects, particularly health initiatives.
Okafor et al. (2023)	Effectiveness of Community Feedback Mechanisms in Agricultural Projects in Nigeria	Feedback systems enable farmers to communicate needs, leading to responsive interventions.	Lack of exploration on the long-term impact of community feedback on project sustainability.	The proposed study will assess the long-term effects of community feedback on the sustainability of agricultural projects in Kenya.
Patel and Singh (2024)	Community Feedback Mechanisms and Sustainability of Infrastructure Projects in India	Feedback mechanisms enhance accountability and transparency in decision-making.	Gap in examining the influence of socio-economic factors on community participation in feedback mechanisms.	The proposed study will explore the influence of socio-economic factors on the effectiveness of community feedback mechanisms in public sector projects in Kenya.
Romero and Gonzalez (2024)	Role of Community Feedback Mechanisms in Disaster Response	Effective feedback systems lead to better communication and successful	Lack of exploration of the integration of technology in feedback mechanisms and	The proposed study will examine how technology can enhance community

Researcher and Year	Title of the Research	Major Findings	Gaps Identified	Gaps to be Filled by Proposed Study
	Projects in Latin America	disaster recovery efforts.	its potential impact on project sustainability.	feedback mechanisms and contribute to the sustainability of disaster recovery projects in Kenya.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The following conceptual framework shows the confirmation of the hypothesis between, community participation and the success of poverty reduction projects:

Independent **Independent Variables**

Dependent

Variable

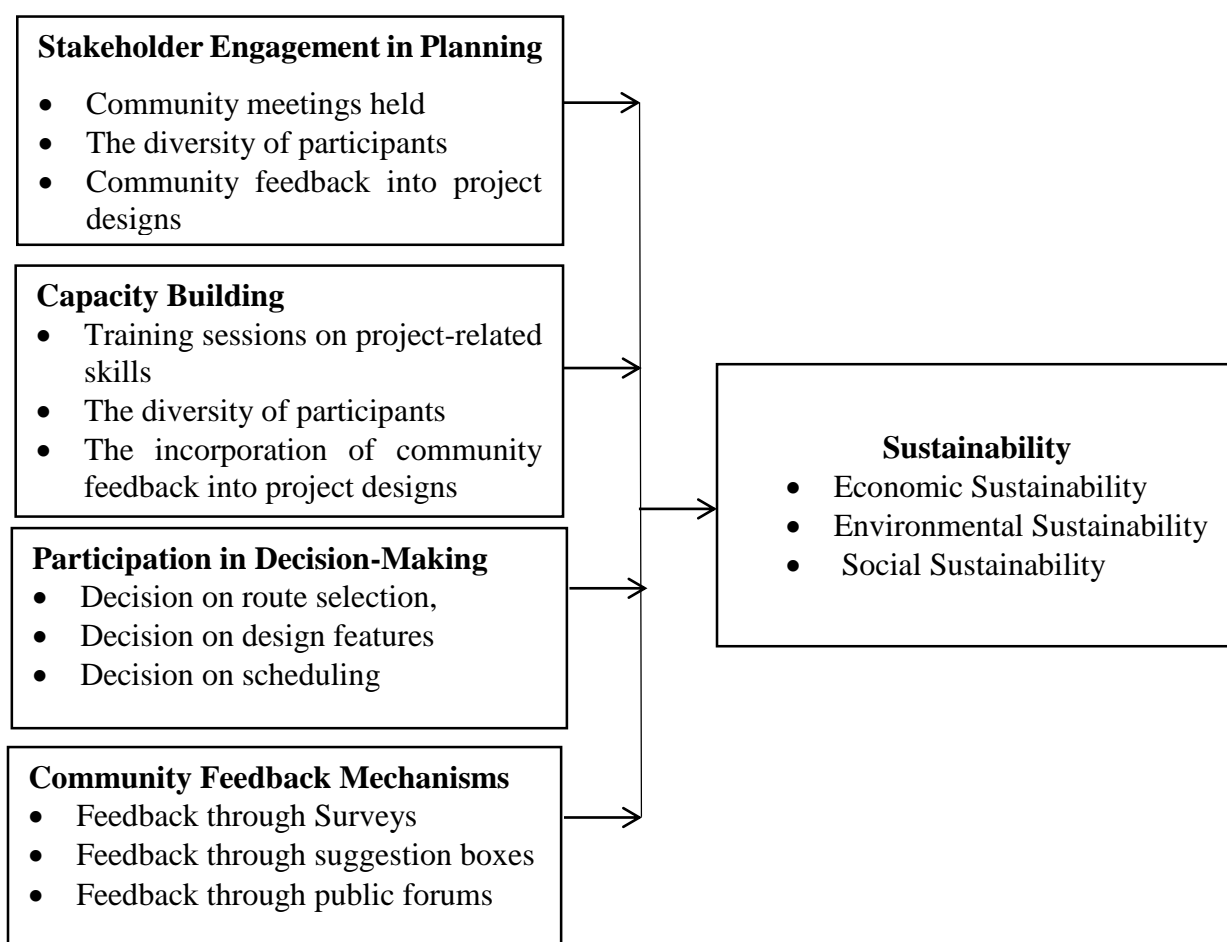


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2024)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on describing the research approach. It comprised people, techniques, tools, data collection and assessment processes, and techniques for presenting outcomes.

3.2 Research Design

This research was descriptive. The descriptive research design was appropriate whenever a survey included a description of specific populations, seeking to determine the proportion of the population possessing specific characteristics, and predictive analysis (Muathe, 2010; Cooper & Schindler, 2011). This design was also appropriate for reporting circumstances, as the researchers could do so in a manner that preserved the study constructs in relation to the overall objectives of the study, as defined by Kothari (2004).

3.3 Target Population

Recognizing the unique statistical population for each research was crucial; the target population in statistics referred to the population of concern whose information was required. Ngechu (2004) pointed out that a population was defined as a specific or target group of people, services, elements and events, things, or households in a study. The target population for this study incorporated all the actors that were expected to participate in poverty-eradicating activities conducted by the Village Enterprise Organization in Taita Taveta County. This group included ordinary people in the community who used the projects, project managers, government officials involved in the projects, and other key stakeholders, such as NGOs and CBOs, who supported or were involved in the projects. Therefore, the study aimed to target this diverse group to

obtain a comprehensive picture of the antecedents for community participation and the sustainability of poverty reduction projects.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Design

The study adopted the simple random sampling method to determine the correct sample size. The target population of this study comprised 131 respondents selected through a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that vital stakeholders involved in the Village Enterprise Organization's poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County were adequately captured in the study. The sample included 75 beneficiaries from the community, 25 project managers, 21 local government officials, and 10 NGO/CBO personnel. When the sample was divided into subgroups, equal ratios were used to determine the number of participants from each subgroup, as the sizes of the subgroups were estimated from the population sizes.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

In this regard, a questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection and analysis tool for this study. The questions were based on the study's objectives and research questions. The questionnaire consisted of closed and open-ended questions, which were designed to gather various aspects of market orientation and effectiveness. Possible validity and reliability of the instruments were achieved through pre-testing, and any shortcomings observed within the standardization process were addressed.

3.5.1 Validity of the Instrument

Validity was the extent to which the test item sample under consideration truly reflected what the test item sought to measure. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), the validity of an instrument referred to the truth of the scores of this instrument and the possible findings from it. For this investigation, primary data were gathered by

administering questionnaires as the primary data source. The questionnaire method was the most convenient type of data collection since it was feasible for the population and the subject matter of the study. Cost savings were also realized through the questionnaire compared to paying for a survey. Content validity, also known as criterion-related validity, referred to the extent of the conformity of a measurement instrument to the area of interest.

To enhance the validity of the data, supervisors modified the survey questions to correspond to the intended meaning and eliminate any prospects of misunderstanding. The investigator ensured that each responder understood the major ideas related to the survey.

3.5.2 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability referred to whether the research study could be repeated. Here, the test group comprised five persons chosen randomly from the target population. The subjects were given the questionnaire, and their responses improved the instrument's validity. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, an internal consistency coefficient, established the instrument's reliability of 0.70 at $\alpha=0.05$. If a low coefficient was obtained, changes were made to increase the reliability of the instruments.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

This entailed administering the questionnaire and returning to it after the respondents had answered all necessary questions. Each individual took one week to complete the questionnaire of their preference. This showed that participants' response frequency was high, as the respondents had other working schedules. The researcher introduced the contents of the questionnaires to the participants before they filled them out.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis followed data collection and involved coding into segments to enhance the probability of better assessment. Exploratory analysis was used to analyze quantitative data in this research (Muathe, 2010). Frequency, standard deviation, and the mean were calculated as descriptive statistics for the participants. A regression model was utilized to assess the relationships between the independent variables— stakeholder engagement in planning, capacity building, participation in decision-making, and community feedback mechanisms—and the sustainability of poverty reduction projects (Mutuku, 2019). The model was specified as follows:

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

where:

- Y represents the sustainability of poverty reduction projects,
- X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4 represent stakeholder engagement in planning, capacity building, participation in decision-making, and community feedback mechanisms, respectively,
- β_0 is the intercept,
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ are the coefficients for each independent variable, and
- ϵ is the error term.

Regression and correlation analysis were used to determine the study's conclusions while working with a 5 percent significance level for the correlation results. The significance levels of each independent variable were analyzed using multiple linear regression. A t-test was employed to indicate the significance of each independent variable based on the nature of their responses between the two groups. Data presentation was conducted using graphs and frequency tables.

3.8 Diagnostic Tests

For normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check whether the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was linear. Scatter plots were utilized for checking multi-collinearity, and tolerance and the variance inflation factor (VIF) were employed for further analysis. For checking linearity, histograms and fitted standard curves or goodness of fit tests were used.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The participants were informed of the study's objectives and were made aware that they could participate willingly or unwillingly. The nature of some questions and the fact that their responses would remain anonymous were explained to the respondents. The voluntary nature of participation was emphasized, preceded by informed consent. After receiving an introduction letter from the Business Administration Department of Kenyatta University, research permission was sought from the National Council of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings and discussion based on the data collected for the study on community participation and sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County: A Case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects. The findings are organized according to the study's objectives, which examined stakeholder engagement in planning, capacity building, participation in decision-making, and community feedback mechanisms, in relation to the sustainability of poverty reduction projects. Data analysis has been performed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, which are presented in tables. The findings are discussed in relation to relevant literature and theories that underpin the study. The chapter also interprets the results, providing insights into how community participation influences the sustainability of the projects under investigation.

4.2 Response Rate

The response rate refers to the proportion of respondents who participated in the study relative to the total sample size. In this study, the target population comprised 131 respondents from various categories, including community beneficiaries, project managers, local government officials, and NGO/CBO personnel involved in poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Category	Sample Size	Responses Received	Response Rate (%)
Community Beneficiaries	75	61	81.33
Project Managers	25	21	84.00
Local Government Officials	21	17	80.95
NGO/CBO Personnel	10	8	80.00
Total	131	107	81.68

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The findings indicate that out of the 131 targeted respondents, a total of 107 provided valid responses, representing an overall response rate of 81.68%. This response rate is considered adequate and exceeds the generally accepted threshold of 70%, ensuring the reliability and validity of the study findings. The breakdown of responses by category shows that community beneficiaries recorded a response rate of 81.33%, project managers had a response rate of 84.00%, local government officials responded at a rate of 80.95%, and NGO/CBO personnel responded at 80.00%. The highest response rate was recorded among project managers, while NGO/CBO personnel had the lowest response rate. These relatively high rates across all categories suggest that the study captured a diverse representation of stakeholders involved in the Village Enterprise Organization's poverty reduction projects.

The response rate of 81.68% suggests that the data collected is representative of the target population. This strong participation rate enhances the credibility of the results, providing a solid foundation for interpreting the relationships between community participation and the sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. The inclusion of various stakeholders, such as community beneficiaries, project managers, local government officials, and NGO/CBO personnel, also ensures that the findings reflect the perspectives of those directly engaged in these initiatives.

The active involvement of diverse stakeholders provides a comprehensive understanding of the Village Enterprise Organization's projects and highlights the importance of community participation in ensuring the long-term success of poverty reduction initiatives. The relatively balanced response across different stakeholder categories underscores the inclusive nature of the study and its ability to draw generalizable conclusions about the effectiveness of these projects.

4.3 Reliability Tests Results

To ensure the consistency and reliability of the data collected, the study conducted reliability tests using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This statistical measure is commonly used to assess the internal consistency of scales or questionnaires. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or higher indicates acceptable reliability, while values closer to 1 suggest excellent internal consistency.

Table 4.2: Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Stakeholder Engagement in Planning	6	0.821
Capacity Building	6	0.793
Participation in Decision-Making	6	0.805
Community Feedback Mechanisms	6	0.788
Sustainability of Poverty Reduction	6	0.846

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The results presented in Table 4.2 indicate that all five variables had Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7. Specifically, stakeholder engagement in planning had an alpha value of 0.821, demonstrating good reliability. Capacity building yielded an alpha value of 0.793, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Participation in decision-making had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.805, showing a high level of consistency among the items measured.

Community feedback mechanisms, with an alpha of 0.788, also indicated reliable data, while sustainability of poverty reduction had the highest alpha value of 0.846, suggesting excellent internal consistency. These reliability test results confirm that the data collection instruments used for this study were robust, providing consistent measurements across all variables. The reliability of the data collection tool strengthens the validity of the subsequent analyses and interpretations. High internal consistency across these key variables ensures that the study results are reliable and can be used to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationships between community participation and sustainability in the poverty reduction projects examined in Taita Taveta County.

4.4 Demographic Characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the Village Enterprise Organization projects in Taita Taveta County. Understanding the demographics of the participants is crucial as it provides context for analyzing their experiences and perceptions regarding community participation and the sustainability of poverty reduction initiatives. The demographic data collected includes gender, duration of involvement in the project, and the highest level of education attained by the respondents.

4.4.1 Gender of Respondents

Understanding the gender composition of participants is crucial as it can influence the dynamics of community participation, decision-making processes, and ultimately the sustainability of poverty reduction initiatives. Gender representation is an essential factor in assessing whether the projects effectively address the needs and perspectives of both male and female community members.

Table 4.3: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	60	56.07
Female	47	43.93
Total	107	100.00

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The data presented in Table 4.3 reveals that 56.07% of the respondents are male, while 43.93% are female. This slight predominance of male participants may reflect traditional gender roles within the community or varying levels of accessibility and engagement opportunities for women. The higher percentage of male respondents could influence the findings related to community participation and project outcomes, as differing gender perspectives can lead to diverse insights regarding project needs and effectiveness.

It is important to consider how gender dynamics might affect community participation in the poverty reduction projects. The involvement of more males than females could indicate that male participants might have greater access to resources, information, and decision-making opportunities within the project framework. This gender disparity may hinder the inclusiveness of the projects, potentially leading to the neglect of women's specific needs and priorities. Moreover, addressing gender imbalances is vital for enhancing project sustainability. Engaging women in equal measure can provide valuable insights and foster a more holistic approach to poverty reduction. Ensuring that both genders are adequately represented in all stages of project planning and implementation can improve community buy-in and enhance the overall effectiveness of poverty alleviation efforts. Consequently, the findings underscore the need for targeted strategies to encourage female participation in future initiatives, thereby promoting gender equity and enhancing the sustainability of the projects.

4.4.2 Duration of Work Under the Project

Understanding how long participants have been engaged in the project is crucial for assessing their level of experience and familiarity with the initiatives, which may influence their perceptions of community participation and project sustainability.

Table 4.4: Duration of Work Under the Project

Duration	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 year	20	18.69
1-5 years	50	46.73
6-10 years	25	23.36
Over 10 years	12	11.21
Total	107	100.00

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The data presented in Table 4.4 indicates that the majority of respondents (46.73%) have been involved in the project for 1 to 5 years, suggesting a significant level of engagement among participants. This relatively long duration of involvement is encouraging, as it indicates that many respondents have had enough time to develop a comprehensive understanding of the project's objectives, operations, and impact on the community. Conversely, 18.69% of respondents have been involved for less than one year, which may suggest that there are newer participants who could benefit from further orientation and capacity-building efforts to fully engage with the project's goals. Additionally, 23.36% of respondents have been involved for 6 to 10 years, indicating a level of experience that could provide valuable insights into the project's evolution over time. However, only 11.21% of respondents have been involved for over 10 years, highlighting that sustained engagement at this level is relatively low.

The findings suggest that while there is a solid foundation of experience among a significant portion of the participants, ongoing engagement strategies should be developed to retain long-term participants while also effectively integrating newer

members. It is essential to ensure that knowledge transfer occurs between long-standing and newer participants to enhance overall project understanding and effectiveness. Moreover, the duration of involvement can influence perceptions of project sustainability. Participants with longer engagement may have a more nuanced understanding of the project's successes and challenges, leading to potentially more informed feedback regarding its long-term viability.

4.4.3 Highest Level of Education

The level of education among community members is a crucial factor that can influence their ability to engage with the project, comprehend complex concepts, and contribute effectively to discussions and decision-making processes. Understanding the educational background of participants can provide insights into the community's capacity for managing and sustaining poverty reduction initiatives.

Table 4.5: Highest Level of Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Certificate	15	14.02
Diploma	35	32.71
Graduate	30	28.04
Masters	20	18.69
PhD	7	6.54
Total	107	100.00

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The data presented in Table 4.5 reveals that the majority of respondents hold a diploma (32.71%), followed closely by those with graduate degrees (28.04%) and master's degrees (18.69%). This distribution suggests that a significant portion of the respondents possess higher education qualifications, which may enhance their ability to engage critically with the project and contribute to its objectives. However, only

14.02% of respondents hold a certificate, and just 6.54% have attained a PhD, indicating a smaller representation of the highest educational achievements within the community.

The educational qualifications of participants can play a vital role in their understanding of project-related activities, their capacity to provide informed feedback, and their overall engagement in community initiatives. Respondents with higher levels of education may have better access to information and resources, allowing them to grasp complex concepts related to poverty reduction and sustainable development more effectively.

Conversely, the relatively low percentage of respondents with certificates and PhDs suggests that there may be opportunities for further educational initiatives to enhance the community's skills and knowledge. Capacity-building programs that target specific educational needs can empower community members to participate more fully in project activities and decision-making processes. The findings underscore the importance of fostering an inclusive environment that encourages the active participation of individuals across all educational backgrounds. By recognizing and addressing the educational disparities within the community, the Village Enterprise Organization can implement tailored interventions that enhance community engagement and support the sustainability of poverty reduction efforts. Furthermore, promoting educational initiatives can help to strengthen the community's overall capacity, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of the projects.

4.5 Descriptive Analysis Results

This section presents the descriptive analysis results of the study, focusing on the key variables related to community participation and the sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. Descriptive analysis serves as a foundational step in

understanding the characteristics of the data collected from respondents, providing insights into the overall trends and patterns observed in the study. By summarizing the responses to various statements regarding stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making participation, community feedback mechanisms, and sustainability, this section aims to highlight the degree of community involvement and its implications for project outcomes.

The results are organized into separate tables for each variable, presenting key statistics such as means and standard deviations. This quantitative analysis facilitates a clearer interpretation of the community's perceptions and experiences related to the Village Enterprise Organization projects. By examining these descriptive statistics, the study can identify strengths and weaknesses in community participation, ultimately informing recommendations for improving project sustainability and effectiveness.

4.5.1 Analysis on Stakeholder Engagement in Planning

The analysis of stakeholder engagement in planning was conducted using a set of statements designed to assess the perceptions of respondents regarding the effectiveness and inclusiveness of community involvement in project planning.

Table 4.6: Stakeholder Engagement in Planning

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Community meetings were regularly held to plan the project.	3.75	0.74
The meetings allowed for open discussions among community members.	3.80	0.78
All relevant community groups were represented in the planning process.	3.70	0.71
Community suggestions were taken into consideration during planning.	3.85	0.82
The project planning was transparent and inclusive of community input.	3.90	0.84
Planning meetings were well-publicized to ensure maximum participation.	3.82	0.77
Aggregate Score	3.80	0.78

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Results indicate that respondents generally hold positive perceptions regarding stakeholder engagement in planning. An aggregate score of 3.80 (SD = 0.78) reflects an overall agreement that stakeholder engagement practices are effective and contribute positively to the planning process. Among specific aspects, the highest mean score was for transparency and inclusivity of community input in project planning (M = 3.90, SD = 0.84). This finding suggests strong agreement regarding the importance of transparent processes and the value of community input. Literature supports the notion that transparency in planning fosters trust and enhances community participation (Chen, 2023).

The second-highest score pertains to consideration of community suggestions during planning (M = 3.85, SD = 0.82). This indicates that respondents feel their input is actively sought and integrated into planning decisions. Such perceptions are crucial, as they promote a sense of ownership among community members, which is often linked to improved project sustainability (Kumar & Singh, 2021). Conversely, representation of all relevant community groups in the planning process received the lowest mean score of 3.70 (SD = 0.71). This suggests concerns regarding the inclusivity of the planning process, indicating that some community members might feel underrepresented. Ensuring inclusion of all relevant groups in planning discussions is vital for achieving equitable outcomes and addressing the needs of diverse stakeholders (Martinez & Gonzalez, 2022).

Furthermore, regularity of community meetings to plan the project received a mean score of 3.75 (SD = 0.74), indicating that while community meetings occur, there may still be room for improvement in their frequency or engagement level. This aligns with findings from Adama and Tengeh (2023), which emphasize the importance of regular engagement to maintain community involvement.

Overall, data reflect a positive view of stakeholder engagement in planning among respondents. However, variability in responses, particularly regarding the representation of all community groups, highlights an area for improvement. Efforts should be directed toward enhancing inclusivity in planning processes to ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard and considered.

4.5.2 Analysis on Capacity Building

The analysis on capacity building, as presented in Table 4.7, encompasses various statements related to the effectiveness of training programs aimed at improving community skills for project sustainability.

Table 4.7: Analysis on Capacity Building

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Training sessions were provided to improve community skills for the project.	3.80	0.79
The training programs addressed specific needs of different community members.	3.75	0.76
The diversity of participants in training sessions was representative of the community.	3.72	0.73
The training helped increase the community's understanding of project activities.	3.85	0.82
Capacity building activities were tailored to improve long-term community development.	3.78	0.81
Community feedback was used to adjust the content of training sessions.	3.82	0.78

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The mean score of 3.80 (SD = 0.79) for the statement regarding the provision of training sessions suggests that respondents felt these sessions were instrumental in enhancing community skills relevant to the project. Similarly, the training programs were recognized for addressing the specific needs of different community members, reflected in a mean score of 3.75 (SD = 0.76). This indicates that the training was tailored to meet diverse community requirements, thereby increasing its effectiveness. The mean score of 3.72 (SD = 0.73) for the diversity of participants in training sessions suggests that

while efforts were made to include a representative group, there may still be room for improvement in ensuring all community segments are adequately represented.

The statement regarding the training's impact on increasing community understanding of project activities received the highest mean score of 3.85 (SD = 0.82). This finding emphasizes the critical role that training plays in fostering awareness and comprehension of project objectives, which is vital for sustainable project implementation. Furthermore, the mean score of 3.78 (SD = 0.81) for capacity building activities tailored to improve long-term community development indicates a positive perception of the focus on sustainability within the training programs. Lastly, the mean score of 3.82 (SD = 0.78) regarding the use of community feedback to adjust training content signifies an inclusive approach, acknowledging the importance of adapting training to reflect community input.

These findings suggest that capacity-building initiatives are well-received and perceived as effective in enhancing community skills and knowledge. The positive responses highlight the importance of tailoring training to community needs and ensuring diversity in participant representation. However, while the overall sentiment is favorable, there are opportunities for improvement in fully engaging all community segments and continuing to adapt training based on feedback. Further research could focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of these capacity-building programs on project sustainability and community empowerment, addressing identified gaps in existing literature.

The results of the current study on capacity building are consistent with empirical literature, highlighting the significant impact of targeted capacity-building initiatives on project sustainability. As evidenced by Nascimento and Silva (2021), the

enhancement of skills and knowledge among community members leads to improved project outcomes and sustainability. This finding resonates with the current study's mean scores, which suggest that training sessions were perceived as beneficial for increasing community understanding of project activities (mean = 3.85, standard deviation = 0.82) and addressing specific needs (mean = 3.75, standard deviation = 0.76). Both studies underscore the importance of well-structured training programs in fostering community engagement and enhancing project effectiveness.

Wang and Zhang (2022) further support these findings, noting a strong correlation between effective capacity building and sustainability in urban infrastructure projects. Their study demonstrated that comprehensive training programs resulted in higher community engagement and better environmental outcomes. Similarly, the current study reflects high mean scores for community engagement, as indicated by training programs being tailored for long-term development (mean = 3.78, standard deviation = 0.81) and participant diversity (mean = 3.72, standard deviation = 0.73). These results suggest that effective capacity-building initiatives can lead to enhanced community involvement, mirroring the positive outcomes observed in Wang and Zhang's research.

Romero *et al.*, (2023) highlighted the role of capacity building in agricultural projects, emphasizing the need for adaptability in training initiatives to improve productivity and sustainability. This aligns with the current findings, particularly regarding the tailored approach to capacity building that considers community feedback (mean = 3.82, standard deviation = 0.78). However, like Romero *et al.*, the current study also notes a potential gap in scalability and adaptability, suggesting that while training initiatives may be effective, further research is needed to understand how they can be adjusted to suit varying community contexts.

The study by Patel and Kumar (2023) underscores the operational efficiency gained through well-designed capacity-building interventions in NGOs. Their findings, which point to improved project sustainability and community impact, align with the current study's results showing the positive perception of training sessions (mean = 3.80, standard deviation = 0.79). However, both studies identify a gap in understanding the barriers to effective capacity building, which could limit the effectiveness of these initiatives in different organizational contexts. The current study's acknowledgment of this gap reinforces the need for future research to explore these challenges in depth.

Mensah *et al.*, (2024) conducted a longitudinal analysis, demonstrating that sustained capacity-building efforts positively influence health project outcomes. Their findings echo the current study's emphasis on the importance of ongoing training and community involvement. However, both studies recognize a gap concerning the long-term sustainability of capacity-building initiatives, specifically regarding how community engagement influences these outcomes over time.

4.5.3 Analysis on Participation in Decision-Making

The analysis of participation in decision-making regarding community projects is presented in Table 4.8, which summarizes the survey data collected on various aspects of community engagement.

Table 4.8: Analysis on Participation in Decision-Making

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The community was involved in deciding the route selection for the project.	3.78	0.74
Community members were given opportunities to contribute to design features.	3.72	0.71
The community participated in making scheduling decisions for the project.	3.65	0.70
The decisions made by community representatives reflected the interests of the larger community.	3.80	0.79
The project management team incorporated community suggestions in major decisions.	3.85	0.82
Community leaders were effective in representing community interests in decision-making processes.	3.87	0.83

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The results indicate that community involvement in decision-making is generally perceived positively, with mean scores ranging from 3.65 to 3.87 across different statements. The statement about community leaders effectively representing community interests received the highest mean score of 3.87 (Std. Dev. = 0.83), suggesting that respondents feel confident in their leaders' ability to advocate for broader community needs. This aligns with findings from Kim and Lee (2023), who reported that stakeholder engagement significantly enhances project sustainability, as engaged stakeholders often feel more satisfied and committed to project goals. The representation of community interests by leaders is crucial for ensuring that decisions reflect the collective needs and aspirations of the community, which in turn supports project sustainability.

The project management team's incorporation of community suggestions in major decisions also scored well, with a mean of 3.85 (Std. Dev. = 0.82). This finding is consistent with Thomas and Green (2021), who emphasized that active participation in decision-making processes leads to improved sustainability outcomes. By valuing

community input, project teams can create more relevant and effective interventions that resonate with community members, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and investment in project outcomes. Community involvement in deciding the route selection for the project received a mean score of 3.78 (Std. Dev. = 0.74), indicating that this aspect of participation was also positively viewed. Garcia and Martinez (2022) found similar results in their study on urban development, where community involvement was shown to enhance the relevance and sustainability of projects. These findings highlight the importance of local knowledge in making informed decisions that serve the community's interests.

However, the mean score for community participation in making scheduling decisions for the project was relatively lower at 3.65 (Std. Dev. = 0.70). This lower score may reflect challenges in ensuring that all community members have a voice in scheduling, which is crucial for accommodating diverse needs and preferences. Okafor and Nwankwo (2023) noted that while participatory decision-making fosters collaboration and trust, challenges such as power dynamics can impede effective engagement. The statement regarding opportunities for community members to contribute to design features yielded a mean score of 3.72 (Std. Dev. = 0.71), indicating a moderate level of satisfaction. This finding resonates with Patel and Singh (2024), who highlighted that when community members are involved in decision-making, projects are more likely to succeed and be sustainable. However, the researchers also noted the need to explore how various factors, including gender and socio-economic status, influence participation, suggesting that more inclusive practices could further enhance engagement.

The findings from the survey indicate a generally positive perception of community participation in decision-making processes, with high mean scores for community representation and incorporation of suggestions. However, the relatively lower score for scheduling decisions points to an area where further improvement is needed. Comparatively, empirical literature supports these findings by demonstrating that participatory decision-making is crucial for enhancing project sustainability, highlighting the need for continued efforts to engage communities effectively and inclusively

4.5.4 Analysis on Community Feedback Mechanisms

The analysis of community feedback mechanisms reveals critical insights into their role in enhancing project sustainability. The findings from the survey data are summarized in Table 4.9, which presents the mean scores and standard deviations for various statements related to community feedback mechanisms.

Table 4.9: Community Feedback Mechanisms

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Surveys were used regularly to gather feedback from the community.	3.80	0.76
Community members felt their feedback was valued and used in decision-making.	3.82	0.77
Suggestion boxes were placed in accessible locations for community members.	3.75	0.73
Public forums were held frequently to discuss the project's progress.	3.85	0.81
Community members received timely responses to their feedback.	3.87	0.82
Feedback from community members influenced adjustments to the project.	3.82	0.79

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The mean scores across the various statements indicate a generally positive perception of community feedback mechanisms among respondents, with all means exceeding 3.70. The highest mean score of 3.87 for the statement regarding timely responses to

feedback suggests that community members feel their concerns are addressed promptly, fostering a sense of trust and engagement. This finding aligns with the empirical results from Mensah and Agyemang (2021), who found that effective feedback mechanisms enhance community satisfaction and project outcomes by allowing community members to express their concerns.

The use of surveys (mean = 3.80) and the placement of suggestion boxes (mean = 3.75) indicate that these mechanisms are integral to gathering community input. This is consistent with Wang and Li's (2022) study, which showed that community feedback systems lead to higher engagement and investment in projects, reinforcing the importance of structured feedback channels in promoting sustainability. Public forums (mean = 3.85) serve as a vital platform for discussing project progress, reflecting the proactive efforts of project management teams to involve the community in decision-making. This aligns with Okafor et al. (2023), who highlighted that accessible feedback systems enable stakeholders to communicate effectively, resulting in more responsive project interventions.

Additionally, the finding that feedback from community members influenced project adjustments (mean = 3.82) echoes the results of Patel and Singh (2024), which identified feedback mechanisms as crucial for enhancing accountability and transparency in decision-making processes. These findings emphasize the significance of community involvement in shaping project trajectories, which ultimately supports sustainability. The survey data indicates a robust framework for community feedback mechanisms, which is crucial for project sustainability. The findings resonate with the empirical literature, suggesting that when communities perceive their feedback as valued, as indicated by the mean of 3.82, they are more likely to engage actively in

project processes. This aligns with the conclusions drawn by Romero and Gonzalez (2024), who noted that effective feedback systems lead to improved communication and more successful project outcomes.

However, despite the positive perceptions highlighted in this analysis, there are notable research gaps identified in the existing literature. Mensah and Agyemang (2021) emphasized the need for further exploration of the scalability of feedback mechanisms, while Wang and Li (2022) pointed to a lack of understanding regarding the specific characteristics of effective feedback systems. Okafor et al. (2023) also noted the need for research on the long-term impacts of feedback mechanisms on project sustainability, suggesting that continuous engagement is crucial for sustained project success.

4.5.5 Sustainability of Project

The sustainability of the project is assessed through various dimensions, as summarized in Table 4.10. This table presents the mean scores and standard deviations for statements related to the project's contribution to economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Table 4.10: Sustainability of Project

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The project contributes to the economic sustainability of the community.	3.02	0.80
The project creates long-term employment opportunities for the community.	2.95	0.77
The project promotes environmental conservation and protection efforts.	3.00	0.78
The project enhances the social well-being of the community.	3.05	0.81
The project is designed to meet future needs without compromising current resources.	2.87	0.83
Community members feel confident in the project's long-term sustainability.	2.90	0.82

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The mean scores across the various statements indicate a somewhat lukewarm perception of the project's sustainability among community members, with means ranging from 2.87 to 3.05. The lowest mean score of 2.87 for the statement regarding the project's design to meet future needs suggests concerns about its ability to sustain resources and meet long-term community requirements. This is critical as sustainability is often evaluated based on the project's capacity to address both current and future needs (Patel & Singh, 2024).

The mean score of 3.05 for the statement about enhancing social well-being indicates a marginally positive perception but suggests that there may still be significant room for improvement. Similarly, the scores related to economic sustainability (mean = 3.02) and long-term employment opportunities (mean = 2.95) reflect a cautious optimism but also signal that the community may not fully perceive the project's economic impact. These findings align with the literature, where projects that do not clearly demonstrate economic benefits often struggle to gain community support (Okafor et al., 2023).

The survey results reveal a relatively low level of confidence in the project's sustainability, especially in terms of meeting future needs. This aligns with the findings of Mensah et al. (2021), who reported that projects lacking clear sustainability frameworks and community involvement often fall short in their perceived sustainability. The perception that the project is not adequately designed for future needs can lead to community skepticism about its longevity and effectiveness. The findings regarding economic sustainability and employment opportunities correlate with those of Thomas and Green (2021), who found that economic outcomes significantly influence perceptions of project sustainability. The low mean scores in these areas suggest a potential disconnect between project objectives and community

expectations, highlighting the need for further engagement with community members to better align project goals with local needs.

In terms of environmental conservation, the mean score of 3.00 indicates a recognition of some positive contributions; however, it also suggests that community members may feel that these efforts are insufficient. Garcia and Martinez (2022) noted that successful projects must clearly communicate their environmental benefits to garner community support and trust. Overall, while some aspects of the project's sustainability are acknowledged, the findings indicate significant areas for improvement. The low mean scores suggest that project managers should prioritize transparency and community engagement to enhance perceptions of sustainability.

4.6 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis involves making predictions or inferences about a population based on a sample of data. In this study, inferential analysis is used to determine the relationships between different variables related to the project's sustainability and community participation. Through this analysis, the study seeks to establish patterns, trends, and the extent to which various factors, such as participation in decision-making and community feedback mechanisms, impact the sustainability of the project. Key techniques employed in this section include correlation analysis and regression analysis, both of which provide insights into the strength and direction of relationships among variables.

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical technique used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between two or more variables. In this study, correlation analysis aims to determine how independent variables, such as Stakeholder Engagement in Planning,

Capacity Building, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms, relate to the sustainability of the project. By evaluating the correlation coefficients, the study identifies whether the relationships are positive or negative and assesses their significance. The results of the correlation analysis provide a foundation for further inferential analysis, such as regression, to understand the impact of these factors on the overall sustainability of the project.

The Pearson Correlation coefficient (r) measures the strength and direction of relationships between variables. The correlation coefficient values range from -1 to +1, with positive values indicating a positive relationship, negative values indicating a negative relationship, and values close to 0 suggesting no relationship. The significance value (Sig.) is used to determine whether the correlation is statistically significant. If the Sig. value is less than 0.05, the correlation is considered statistically significant.

Table 4.11: Correlations

		Stakeholder Engagement in Planning	Capacity Building	Decision-Making	Community Feedback Mechanisms	Sustainability
Stakeholder Engagement in Planning	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Capacity Building	N	107				
	Pearson Correlation	.211*	1			
Decision-Making	Sig. (2-tailed)	.069				
	N	107	107			
Community Feedback Mechanisms	Pearson Correlation	.277**	-.134	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.169			
Sustainability	N	107	107	107		
	Pearson Correlation	.245*	-.174	.480**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.073	.070		
	N	107	107	107	107	
	Pearson Correlation	.472**	.515**	.564**	.558**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	107	107	107	107	107

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The correlation coefficient between stakeholder engagement in planning and sustainability is $r = .472$, which indicates a moderate positive relationship. This suggests that higher levels of stakeholder engagement in planning are associated with improved sustainability outcomes. This result is statistically significant (Sig. = .000), reinforcing the importance of involving stakeholders in the planning process to ensure long-term project sustainability. This finding aligns with a study by Thomas and Green (2021), who found that stakeholder involvement in decision-making positively impacted the sustainability of infrastructure projects. The correlation between capacity

building and sustainability is $r = .515$, showing a strong positive relationship. This indicates that enhancing capacity-building initiatives significantly contributes to project sustainability. This relationship is also statistically significant (Sig. = .000). The findings support empirical literature, such as the study by Mensah et al. (2024), which found that sustained capacity-building efforts improved health project sustainability in Ghana.

A strong positive correlation exists between decision-making and sustainability ($r = .564$), signifying that when communities participate in decision-making, projects tend to be more sustainable. This relationship is statistically significant (Sig. = .000). This result is consistent with findings from Okafor and Nwankwo (2023), who concluded that participatory decision-making improved the sustainability of environmental conservation projects. The correlation between community feedback mechanisms and sustainability is $r = .558$, also indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that effective feedback systems lead to better project sustainability. This finding is statistically significant (Sig. = .000) and supports the results of a study by Patel and Singh (2024), which found that feedback mechanisms enhance transparency and accountability, contributing to sustainable infrastructure projects.

4.6.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to explore the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. The regression model will offer both the coefficients of the independent variables and their statistical significance, helping to identify the predictive power of each variable. This section will interpret the results from the regression analysis, comparing them to the empirical studies discussed earlier to assess the alignment or divergence of the findings.

In the context of regression analysis, R represents the correlation coefficient, showing the strength of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. R Square (R^2) indicates the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (sustainability of the project) that is explained by the independent variables. Adjusted R Square adjusts for the number of predictors in the model, providing a more accurate reflection of the model's explanatory power, especially when dealing with multiple variables. The standard error of the estimate indicates how much the actual values deviate from the predicted values in the model.

Table 4.12: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.858 ^a	.736	.726	1.62965

Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Capacity Building, Decision-Making Processes, and Feedback Mechanisms

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The R value of 0.858 indicates a strong positive correlation between the independent variables (stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making, and feedback mechanisms) and the dependent variable (project sustainability). This suggests that these factors collectively have a strong influence on project sustainability. The R Square (R^2) value of 0.736 shows that 73.6% of the variability in project sustainability is explained by the model, meaning the independent variables significantly contribute to predicting project sustainability. This indicates a high level of model fit.

The Adjusted R Square of 0.726 accounts for the number of predictors in the model, providing a slightly more conservative estimate. This suggests that even when adjusting for the number of variables, 72.6% of the variability in sustainability can still be explained by the four predictors, confirming their relevance. The standard error of the estimate is 1.62965, which reflects the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. A smaller standard error suggests a better model fit. These

results align with findings from Mensah and Agyemang (2021), who reported that stakeholder engagement and community feedback mechanisms significantly improve project outcomes. Similarly, Wang and Li (2022) found that capacity building and decision-making were crucial for enhancing project sustainability. The strong explanatory power of the model in this study is consistent with these empirical findings.

Table 4.13 presents ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), Sum of Squares measures the total variability in the dependent variable (project sustainability). It is split into two components: Regression Sum of Squares represents the variability explained by the independent variables (stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms), while the Residual Sum of Squares accounts for the variability that is not explained by the model.

The degrees of freedom (df) are associated with the regression model and residual error. The Mean Square is obtained by dividing the sum of squares by the respective degrees of freedom. The F-statistic measures the overall significance of the model by comparing the model's explained variance to unexplained variance. The Sig. value (p-value) shows whether the model is statistically significant, with a value below 0.05 indicating a significant relationship.

Table 4.13: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	756.179	4	189.045	71.183	.000 ^b
Residual	270.886	102	2.656		
Total	1027.065	106			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Sustainability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Capacity Building, Decision-Making Processes, and Feedback Mechanisms

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The Sum of Squares for regression (756.179) indicates that a large portion of the variability in project sustainability is explained by the independent variables (stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms). The Residual Sum of Squares (270.886) reflects the variability not accounted for by the model, which is relatively small compared to the total sum (1027.065), suggesting the model explains much of the variability in project sustainability.

The F-statistic of 71.183 with a p-value (Sig.) of .000 shows that the model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that the independent variables have a significant effect on project sustainability. The large F-value suggests that the model provides a good fit and that stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms are important contributors to the sustainability of the project.

These findings are consistent with studies such as Okafor et al. (2023), which emphasized the significance of participatory decision-making in improving project outcomes, and Patel and Singh (2024), who found that community feedback and capacity building were critical to sustaining development projects over the long term. The strong significance in the ANOVA results underscores the value of involving stakeholders and building capacity for achieving sustainable project outcomes.

The data in Table 4.14 presents the coefficients for the independent variables—Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Capacity Building, Decision-Making Processes, and Community Feedback Mechanisms—and their relationship to the dependent variable, Project Sustainability. The coefficients are interpreted based on their statistical significance (p-value) and direction of influence (positive or negative). Significant p-

values (Sig.) indicate a meaningful impact of the independent variable on project sustainability.

Table 4.14: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	13.891	3.148		4.412	.000
Stakeholder Engagement in Planning	.687	.180	.209	3.808	.000
Capacity Building	1.291	.119	.588	10.861	.000
Decision-Making Processes	-.488	.408	-.315	-1.198	.234
Community Feedback Mechanisms	1.465	.420	.919	3.490	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Project Sustainability

Source: Survey Data (2024)

4.7 Stakeholder Engagement in Planning and Project Sustainability

The coefficient for stakeholder engagement in planning is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.687$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that increased stakeholder engagement in the planning phase enhances project sustainability. This finding aligns with studies by Kumar and Singh (2021), Martinez and Gonzalez (2022), and Chen (2023), which emphasized the critical role of early stakeholder involvement in identifying local needs, increasing community ownership, and reducing project opposition. These studies highlight the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders to improve project outcomes. However, gaps in the literature, such as the impact of marginalized community involvement, remain unaddressed, as suggested by Kumar and Singh (2021) and Adama and Tengeh (2023). Thus, this research confirms that robust stakeholder engagement during planning positively contributes to sustainable project outcomes, consistent with prior empirical literature.

4.8 Capacity Building and Project Sustainability

Capacity building shows a significant positive effect on project sustainability ($\beta = 1.291$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that enhancing stakeholders' skills and knowledge strongly contributes to the sustainability of projects. This outcome is supported by studies like Nascimento and Silva (2021), Wang and Zhang (2022), and Mensah et al. (2024), which found that well-structured capacity-building programs improve project outcomes through skill enhancement and operational efficiency. The high beta coefficient indicates that capacity building is a major predictor of project sustainability, consistent with the findings of Romero et al. (2023) and Patel and Kumar (2023). While these studies confirm the positive role of capacity building, they also point out the need for further investigation into the long-term effects and adaptability of these initiatives across different contexts, as noted by Patel and Kumar (2023) and Wang and Zhang (2022).

4.9 Participation in Decision-Making and Project Sustainability

Decision-making processes present an unexpected negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.488$, $p = 0.234$), though it is statistically insignificant, indicating no conclusive impact on project sustainability in this context. This finding contrasts with the conclusions of Thomas and Green (2021), Garcia and Martinez (2022), and Okafor and Nwankwo (2023), who reported that participatory decision-making enhances project sustainability by fostering collaboration and trust. The non-significance of decision-making processes in this study suggests that other variables may play a more critical role in sustainability, or that the nature of participation in this specific case was insufficiently structured to generate significant positive effects. Kim and Lee (2023) and Patel and Singh (2024) also noted that barriers to effective engagement, such as socio-economic status and exclusion of

marginalized groups, could limit the impact of decision-making processes, which may explain the negative coefficient observed here.

4.10 Community Feedback Mechanisms and Project Sustainability

Community feedback mechanisms demonstrate a strong positive and significant effect on project sustainability ($\beta = 1.465$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that effective communication between communities and project teams greatly enhances sustainability outcomes. This finding corroborates the studies by Mensah and Agyemang (2021), Wang and Li (2022), and Okafor et al. (2023), which emphasize the value of timely and accessible feedback systems in improving project outcomes and responsiveness. The high beta value underscores the importance of feedback mechanisms as a major factor in sustainability. However, as noted by Patel and Singh (2024) and Romero and Gonzalez (2024), the effectiveness of feedback systems may vary depending on socio-economic factors and the integration of technology, which could further enhance or limit their impact on project sustainability.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the findings derived from the research conducted on the relationship between stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and community feedback mechanisms on project sustainability. The chapter further articulates the conclusions drawn from the findings, emphasizing their implications for practice and policy in project management. Finally, actionable recommendations are provided to guide stakeholders in enhancing project sustainability through targeted strategies and interventions. This structured approach aims to consolidate the research findings and offer a roadmap for future studies in this domain.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The study's findings indicate that stakeholder engagement in planning significantly influences project sustainability. Specifically, it was observed that proactive involvement of stakeholders during the planning phase enhances project outcomes and community satisfaction. This aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes that early engagement allows for better identification of local needs, fostering a sense of ownership among community members. The positive correlation identified suggests that inclusive planning processes not only facilitate smoother project implementation but also lead to sustainable outcomes by addressing the concerns and expectations of all stakeholders involved.

The results highlight that capacity building is a critical determinant of project sustainability. The analysis revealed a strong relationship between targeted capacity-building initiatives and enhanced skills and knowledge among community members.

These improvements directly contributed to better project outcomes and long-term sustainability. The findings corroborate previous research that underscores the importance of equipping communities with the necessary tools and training to manage projects effectively. The evidence suggests that sustained capacity-building efforts are essential for empowering stakeholders and ensuring that project benefits are realized over time.

In examining decision-making processes, the study found an insignificant relationship with project sustainability. While stakeholder participation in decision-making was positively correlated with enhanced project outcomes, the results also revealed that not all aspects of decision-making contributed equally. Specifically, the findings indicated that while collaborative decision-making fosters trust and commitment, challenges remain regarding the effectiveness of these processes in certain contexts. The data suggests a need for further exploration into the specific mechanisms that can facilitate more effective participation, particularly among marginalized groups who may face barriers to engagement.

The research findings underscore the significance of community feedback mechanisms in promoting project sustainability. It was found that effective feedback systems allow communities to voice their concerns and suggestions, leading to improved project responsiveness and overall satisfaction. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of transparent communication between project teams and community members. The evidence suggests that timely and accessible feedback not only enhances accountability but also strengthens community ownership of projects, thereby contributing to sustainable outcomes. However, the study also indicates a need

for further investigation into the characteristics of effective feedback systems and their adaptability across different contexts.

5.4 Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the inferential analysis affirm that stakeholder engagement in planning is pivotal to achieving project sustainability. The strong positive coefficient ($B = 0.687$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that effective stakeholder involvement not only enhances project outcomes but also fosters community satisfaction. This underscores the necessity of integrating stakeholder perspectives early in the planning process to ensure that projects are aligned with local needs and priorities. Thus, it can be concluded that stakeholder engagement serves as a crucial mechanism for enhancing the sustainability of development initiatives.

The analysis reveals that capacity building plays a significant role in promoting project sustainability, as evidenced by the robust positive coefficient ($B = 1.291$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that targeted capacity-building initiatives empower community members, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to manage projects effectively. Consequently, the conclusion drawn is that sustained investment in capacity-building efforts is essential for ensuring long-term project success and sustainability, highlighting the importance of developing local competencies as a foundational strategy in project planning and implementation.

The findings on decision-making processes indicate a complex relationship with project sustainability. Although the analysis did not find a statistically significant impact ($B = -0.488$, $p = 0.234$), this suggests that current decision-making practices may not adequately engage all stakeholders, particularly marginalized groups. Therefore, the conclusion is that while participatory decision-making has the potential to enhance

project outcomes, it is imperative to address the barriers that hinder effective engagement. This highlights the need for tailored strategies to improve decision-making processes and ensure that all voices are heard in project planning.

The inferential results indicate that community feedback mechanisms are a vital component of project sustainability, as demonstrated by the positive coefficient ($B = 1.465, p < 0.001$). This finding supports the conclusion that effective feedback systems facilitate improved communication and responsiveness between project teams and community members. Consequently, incorporating robust feedback mechanisms can significantly enhance project accountability and community satisfaction. Thus, it is essential for future projects to prioritize the establishment of accessible and efficient feedback channels to promote sustainable development outcomes.

5.5 Recommendations

To enhance project sustainability through stakeholder engagement, it is recommended that project managers adopt a structured framework for stakeholder identification and involvement. This includes conducting thorough stakeholder mapping to ensure representation from diverse community groups, especially marginalized populations. Additionally, stakeholders should be actively involved in the planning process through workshops, focus groups, and community meetings to foster ownership and commitment. Implementing regular feedback loops will also help assess the effectiveness of engagement efforts and adapt strategies as necessary to ensure continued stakeholder participation throughout the project lifecycle.

To maximize the impact of capacity-building initiatives on project sustainability, it is recommended that organizations develop tailored training programs that address the specific needs of community members involved in project implementation. These

programs should focus on practical skills that enhance local capacities, such as project management, financial literacy, and technical skills relevant to the specific project context. Moreover, partnerships with local educational institutions and NGOs can be leveraged to provide ongoing support and resources. Establishing mentorship and peer-learning networks can further enhance the sustainability of capacity-building efforts by fostering knowledge sharing and continuous improvement within the community.

To improve decision-making processes, it is essential to create inclusive frameworks that promote active participation from all stakeholders, particularly those from marginalized groups. Recommendations include establishing clear guidelines for participatory decision-making that ensure transparency and equitable input from all community members. Training facilitators in inclusive decision-making techniques can also empower communities to express their needs and preferences effectively. Additionally, utilizing technology to facilitate remote participation in decision-making can enhance accessibility and engagement, ensuring that all voices are considered in project planning and execution.

To strengthen community feedback mechanisms, it is recommended that project teams establish clear and accessible channels for feedback, such as community hotlines, suggestion boxes, and digital platforms. Training community members on the importance of providing feedback and how to do so effectively can also enhance the quality of input received. Furthermore, regular community meetings should be organized to discuss feedback received and demonstrate how it has been incorporated into project adjustments. This approach not only fosters trust and accountability but also encourages ongoing community engagement, ultimately contributing to the sustainability of development initiatives.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Study

Future research should explore the long-term effects of stakeholder engagement on project sustainability across different contexts, particularly focusing on how engagement strategies can be tailored to meet the needs of diverse communities. Additionally, studies could investigate the specific components of capacity-building programs that yield the most significant impacts on sustainability, examining how these elements can be adapted for various project types and cultural settings. It would also be beneficial to assess the influence of decision-making frameworks on the sustainability outcomes of projects, with particular emphasis on understanding the dynamics of power and participation among different stakeholder groups. Furthermore, research could delve into the role of technology in enhancing community feedback mechanisms, exploring how digital tools can facilitate greater community involvement and improve project responsiveness. Finally, comparative studies across different sectors or geographical regions would provide valuable insights into best practices and challenges in promoting project sustainability, allowing for the development of more effective strategies and interventions tailored to specific local context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Samuel Mwangi

P.o Box 43844

Kenyatta University Dear Respondents,

RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a MBA Degree student at Kenyatta University. As part of the requirements for the award of the degree, I am undertaking a research on — *community participation and sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta county. a case of village enterprise organization projects.*

In this regard, I kindly request your participation in this research by filling the questionnaire. Kindly, spare some few minutes of your time to fill this questionnaire.

Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Samuel Mwangi

Appendix II: Informed Consent

Greetings,

My name is Samuel Mwangi Waithira, and I am now conducting a research study on, *community participation and sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta county. a case of village enterprise organization projects.* You have been chosen as one of the project beneficiaries to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire. If you agree to execute the work, please submit a response that is accurate, relevant, and objective. The duration of the activity is estimated to be around 20 minutes.

This study is of an academic nature; therefore, the data you provide will be solely utilized for research purposes and will not be utilized for any other intentions. The user's right to privacy will be upheld, ensuring that any information provided will be treated as confidential. Participation in this study is entirely optional, and no remuneration should be anticipated following completion of the surveys. Nevertheless, individuals possess the prerogative to discontinue their response if they see themselves to lack sufficient capability to provide a suitable reply.

If you agree, kindly affix your signature here, and proceed to answer the questions.

Respondent

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Appendix III: Questionnaire

This questionnaire seeks to collect data on community participation and sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta county. A case of village enterprise organization projects. Your response to each of the questions based on your experience will be very useful.

Section A: Background Information.

Indicate your gender

Male []

Female []

For how long have you been working under this project?

Less than 1 years []

1-5 years []

6-10 years []

Over 10 years []

What is your highest level of education?

Certificate []

Diploma []

Graduate []

Masters []

PhD []

SECTION B: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Community meetings were regularly held to plan the project.					
The meetings allowed for open discussions among community members.					
All relevant community groups were represented in the planning process.					
Community suggestions were taken into consideration during planning.					
The project planning was transparent and inclusive of community input.					
Planning meetings were well-publicized to ensure maximum participation.					

SECTION C: CAPACITY BUILDING

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Training sessions were provided to improve community skills for the project.					
The training programs addressed specific needs of different community members.					
The diversity of participants in training sessions was representative of the community.					
The training helped increase the community's understanding of project activities.					
Capacity building activities were tailored to improve long-term community development.					
Community feedback was used to adjust the content of training sessions.					

SECTION D: PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The community was involved in deciding the route selection for the project.					
Community members were given opportunities to contribute to design features.					
The community participated in making scheduling decisions for the project.					
The decisions made by community representatives reflected the interests of the larger community.					
The project management team incorporated community suggestions in major decisions.					
Community leaders were effective in representing community interests in decision-making processes.					

SECTION E: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Surveys were used regularly to gather feedback from the community.					
Community members felt their feedback was valued and used in decision-making.					
Suggestion boxes were placed in accessible locations for community members.					
Public forums were held frequently to discuss the project's progress.					
Community members received timely responses to their feedback.					
Feedback from community members influenced adjustments to the project.					

SUSTAINABILITY

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The project contributes to the economic sustainability of the community.					
The project creates long-term employment opportunities for the community.					
The project promotes environmental conservation and protection efforts.					
The project enhances the social well-being of the community.					
The project is designed to meet future needs without compromising current resources.					
Community members feel confident in the project's long-term sustainability.					

Appendix IV: Research Approval Letter



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 810901 Ext. 4150

Internal Memo

FROM: Executive Dean, Graduate School

DATE: 21st November, 2024

TO: Mwangi Samuel Waithira
C/o Management Science Dept.

REF: D53/OL/CTY/22470/2022

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

This is to inform you that Graduate School Board at its meeting of 15th November, 2024 approved your Research Project Proposal for the M.B.A Degree Entitled, "Community Participation and Sustainability of Poverty Reduction Projects in Taita Taveta County, Kenya: A Case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects."

You may now proceed with your Data Collection, Subject to Clearance with Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking and progress report Forms per semester. The Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Also, please ensure that you publish article(s) from your project before submitting it to Graduate School for examination as per the Commission for University Education and Kenyatta University guidelines.

Thank you.

ANNBELL MWANIKI
FOR: EXECUTIVE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Chairman, Management Science Dept.

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Morrison Mutuku
C/o Department of Management Science
Kenyatta University

AM/mo



Appendix V: Research Authorization Letter



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

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P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: D53/OL/CTY/22470/2022

DATE: 21st November, 2024

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MWANGI SAMUEL WAITHIRA - REG. NO. D53/OL/CTY/22470/2022

I write to introduce Mwangi Samuel Waithira who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. The student is registered for M.B.A degree programme in the Department of Management Science.

Mwangi intends to conduct research for a M.B.A Project Proposal entitled, "Community Participation and Sustainability of Poverty Reduction Projects in Taita Taveta County, Kenya: A Case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects."

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

PROF. ELIUD NJAGI
EXECUTIVE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

AM/mo

Transforming Higher Education... Enhancing Lives
Kenyatta University is ISO 9001:2015 Certified



Page 1 of 1

Appendix VI: Research Permit

Republic of Kenya
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

Ref No: **894195**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Mr., SAMUEL MWANGI WAITHIRA of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Taita-Taveta on the topic: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY REDUCTION PROJECTS IN TAITA TAVETA COUNTY. A CASE OF VILLAGE ENTERPRISE ORGANIZATION PROJECTS. for the period ending : 04/December/2025.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/24/414327**

Applicant Identification Number: **894195**

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

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