



Community Participation as the Panacea of Sustainable Community Based Projects in Nyeri County, Kenya: The Moderating Role of Legal-political Framework

*Alice Njeri Nderi¹, Fredrick Muniu¹, Manjit Singh², Paul Kiumbe¹

¹Karatina University, P.O Box 1957-10101, Karatina

²Punjabi University, Patiala, India

*Corresponding Email: anderi@karu.ac.ke

Abstract

It is of great importance that community based projects aimed at empowering and improving the livelihood of target communities continue to deliver their intended benefits as long as the needs they aim at addressing still exist. However, such projects face challenges of sustainability especially in developing nations. The curiosity that lingered on the researchers' mind was why some CBPs in the study area were experiencing success and sustainability while others did not. The study sought to find out whether community participation had a significant influence on sustainability of CBPs and whether the strength of the relationship between community participation and CBP sustainability is moderated by legal-political framework. A mixed method research approach was employed in this study. Data for the study was collected using survey questionnaires and interview schedules. To collect quantitative data, participants in our survey were CBPs members who were duly registered. Using multistage cluster sampling technique and guided by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) model for determining sample sizes, 380 respondents out of 34098 registered CBPs members were selected from a variety of 1861 registered CBPs. For the qualitative aspect of the study, interviews were conducted on six (6) community projects regional coordinators both from the government agency in charge of community projects and non-governmental organizations who were purposively selected for the study. Applying descriptive- correlational research design in a cross- sectional survey, our study reveals that involvement of project members in the community projects lifecycle has a significant positive influence on project sustainability. Our study also finds that legal political-framework plays a moderating role in the relationship between community participation and project sustainability. Implications for community participation, legal-political frame-work, project sustainability and directions for future research are discussed.

Key words: Community based projects, community participation, project sustainability, legal-political framework, project beneficiaries.

INTRODUCTION

The diminishing effectiveness of governments in developing nations in delivering services to uplift the livelihood of communities has led to the introduction of community based strategy to development in the form of community based projects (CBPs). CBPs are targeting communities for the purpose of empowering and improving the livelihood of beneficiaries. However, such projects face challenges of sustainability (Aga *et al.*, 2017). To address this problem, stakeholders are trying to come up with strategies to enhance CBPs sustainability. For instance, governments and non-governmental organizations across the world have sought to respond to the challenges of the sustainability of CBPs by emphasizing on community participation, supporting infrastructure development, increasing capacity development opportunities, and altering community development policies at the grass root level (Cavaye, 2015). This in turn has led to the introduction of a bottom-up development strategy that allows community members to



have overall decisions and responsibility for their projects ongoing initiation, design, implementation and maintenance (Agha-Ah Mah, 2016)

The community participatory approach to development is now the favored approach to community based development projects by most bilateral, multilateral, national and local aid organizations (Flint, 2012). Community participation in CBPs is often considered empowering. Communities' members' contribution in CBPs in kind and cash is regarded practically beneficial, it is empowering in creating a feeling of ownership and the related perceptions of responsibility for the CBPs which then result in the proper maintenance of the CBPs (Rijal, 2023). In the same vein, Rifkin (2014) avers that community project participatory approach is a tactic that gives control over planning decisions and investment resources for local development projects to community groups. Evidence from the literature indicate that community participation in projects has made such powerful inroads into community projects development thinking (Rhynard-Geil, 2013; Draper *et al.*, 2010; Cleaver, 2004; Platteau and Abraham, 2002). However, the enthusiasm to research on the topic under study is as the result of the observable and statistically evidenced data on sustained and un-sustained CBPs in the study area.

The curiosity that lingered on the researchers' mind was why some CBPs were experiencing sustainability while others experienced failure and subsequent unsustainability yet community participation has been embraced as a strategy for sustainable CBPs. This study further introduces the moderating role of legal-political framework in terms of its interacting effect on community participation in the CBPs initiation, management and maintenance. Therefore, in addition to providing for empirical evidence on the effect of community participation of CBPs sustainability, the study will explore whether legal-political framework moderates the relationship between community participation and CBPs sustainability. The study will validate a claim by (Huq, 2012) that community empowerment, and participatory approach to community projects are contingent upon enabling government. Legal-political framework implies the presence of an effective legislative structure to regulate and influence the transparency and accountability of community projects governance and political goodwill that facilitates the community members' ability to project their voices in the management of their projects (Abdullahi, 2018). Thus, the purpose of this article is twofold. The first objective is to investigate the effect of community participation on the sustainability of CBPs. The second objective is to test the interaction effect of legal-political framework in the relationship between community participation and CBPs sustainability.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents the theoretical framework of the study by discussing the constructs employed: community participation, legal-political framework and CBPs sustainability.

Community Participation

Participation of the community in CBPs has been widely acknowledged as a key component of CBPs planning, implementation and management of the projects (Amadi, 2017; Barasa & Jelagat, 2013). Community participation in CBPs activities is a rich concept that varies with its application and definition. Therefore, Boon *et al.* (2013) advises that participation should be explained with a contextualized definition or interpretation. Talò *et al.* (2014) define participation as a means to educate target community project beneficiaries in order to increase their competence in the ventures that affect them. This means that it is a vehicle for influencing



CBPs decisions that affect the lives of community members and an avenue for transferring CBPs ownership, management, and power to the CBPs members. According to Beierle (2010) and Armitage (2005) participation is a practice by which CBPs beneficiaries act in response to their individual and group needs, air their opinions about decisions that affect them and take responsibility for changes to their community.

Ojha et al. (2016) defined participation as communal efforts to nurture and employ control over community resources and institutions. This definition points towards a mechanism for ensuring community participation in activities of initiatives that impact their life. In the context of community based ventures, community participation refers to a dynamic process whereby beneficiaries of an intervention influence the direction, execution and management of community based development projects rather than simply receive a share of project benefits (Bamberger *et al.*, 2010). Further, Haq et al., (2014) avers that Community participation infuses a sense of responsibility and is achieved through well-conceived community involvement strategies. It is defined as the process whereby the responsibility for ongoing planning, design and implementation of community projects is being transferred from project initiators and donors to project end-users (Sally *et al.*, 2012).

It is argued that community participation allows local communities to have a greater say in the initiation and management of their own projects (Amadi, 2017; Attree et al., 2011; Labonne & Chase, 2009). This means that the beneficiary communities will have full authority and control over the ongoing planning and implementation of projects intended to meet their needs. On a contrary view, Fursova et al. (2023) argues that community participation can be technocratic and discriminatory, by simply getting community members to participate in CBPs while in reality the CBP is extortive and not transformative and empowering. Likewise, Ward et al. (2018) argued that participation can increase the range of standpoints in decision-making thus increasing the potential for conflict in a venture, and resulting to poor relationships amongst community members. Further, Grant et al (2023) claims that participation is a potentially pliable concept, and can be reframed to suit the needs of those accorded with formal power to convene participatory processes without challenging power relations that undermine community participation in the CBPs. Thus, the weight of evidence over the years suggests that communities where CBPs are implemented have remained on the margins in partnerships and other initiatives (Eversole, 2011; Taylor, 2007).

The fundamental idea behind the concept of community participation is that the beneficiary communities of a project should have a major role in its planning and should have overall responsibility for the project operations and maintenance. The assumption is that community participation instils a sense of ownership and responsibility, and can subsequently nurture local relationships, all of which impact positively on sustainable management and continuity of local projects (Reid & Howard, 2016; Holzer et al., 2014; Christens & Zeldin, 2011).

Accordingly, based on the above arguments, while the welfare of the community seems to be the main motivation of community participation in CBPs, personal and institutional benefits appear to be central factors considered by individuals when deciding to participate in CBPs. Nevertheless, this paper considers CBPs as initiatives that seek to empower local community groups and institutions by giving the communities direct control over their project decisions, through a process that emphasizes inclusive participation and management. Subsequently, participatory community projects is perceived to create effective community infrastructure and improve the welfare of the project members.



Legal-Political Framework

Legal-political factors according to Wallerstein et al. (2017) refer to issues at the national and regional level including consistent in policies, laws and regulations and political stability. To carefully assess whether the government has capacity to support CBPs in a manner consistent with both upward commitment and downward accountability, a historical, political and social analysis of at a country and local level is critical in addition to economic analysis (Dodman & Mitlin, 2013) Additionally, Wang et al. (2016) suggested that there should be commitment by the government to a cultural change in CBPs institutional environment, which has to become more participatory, responsible and transparent, with downward accountability.

Chemouni (2018) argued that pursuing implementation of a CBP is eminently a political process Therefore, a futuristic analysis of the role of the project managers or coordinators cannot be made without analyzing the political environment in which they operate. It is probable that the impact of government on the lives of individual community members would continue to increase, with the increase in CBPs political environmental regulations (Salazar, 2017; Kashwan, 2016). From development project's perspective, political factors contribute to an environment of certainty or otherwise in projects (Mombeshora & Le Bel, 2010).

The way governments intervene in community ventures is highly diverse in nature. Such interventions may include legislative and regulatory interference by means of laws, by-laws, policies, directives, and guidelines (Wang, 2018; Miller, 2013). Further, the government may involve more facilitatory interventions such as strategies, programmes, and projects (Van der Waladt, 2015; Nyström et al., 2014). Additionally, government involvements in community interventions may entail physical input such as physical infrastructure development, and spatial planning (Wang, 2018; Cavaye, 2015)

Sustainability of CBPs

In recent times, the publicity around sustainable development; environmental, economic and the most recent social, has increased dramatically across the globe. From the concerted efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), sustainability activism, and governments, sustainability is something our society is beginning to talk about more frequently (Alvarado-Herrera et al., 2017; Gore, 2015).

One of the most cited definitions of sustainability in the development arena is drawn from the report of the Brundtland Commission (*Our Common Future*) which defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report, 1987). In this regard, sustainable development was predominantly seen as an environmental concept and consequently understood as such. Global economic and social developments led to the broadening of the concept to include economic aspects and social inclusion (Whyte and Lamberton, 2020; Owosuyi, 2015).

The perspectives, content and interpretation of sustainable development has witnessed a paradigm shift with significant focus on the different ecological, economic and social dimensions of human development. For instance, human security (UNDP, 2011), cultural liberty (UNDP, 2015), global warming (UNDP Annual Report, 2007), mobility (UNDP, 2009) and human capacity expansion (Sen, 2015). In turn, the measurement of sustainable development which was traditionally theorized from an environment protection and economic growth perspectives has been expanded to include other indicators such as the rule of law and political



regimes (institutional indicators) as well as continued and integrated communities' development (social indicators) (Gouda et al., 2018; Sheehan et al., 2017; Owosuyi, 2015; Amran et al., 2015).

Literature reveals little consensus on the operational definitions and concept of sustainability (Ruggerio, 2021; Olawumi, & Chan, 2020; Whyte and Lamberton, 2020; Olawumi & Chan, 2018). Thus, sustainability is viewed as a multidimensional concept. Consequently, Gruen *et al.* (2008) and Rabin *et al.* (2012) identified three kinds of sustainability perspectives:

maintaining flow of benefits that were realized in the initial project (IFAD, 2015; Spaling et al., 2014; Greenhalgh et al. 2012; Mancini & Marek, 2004)

continuing project activities within an existing community structure(routinization) (Merriam-Webster 2013; Slaghuis et al. 2011; Bartholomew *et al.*, 2006; Shediach-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; Yin, 1981), and

building the capacity of the beneficiary community members to manage the project (Oino *et al.*, 2015; Schell et al., 2013; Hacker *et al.*, 2012; Stirman et al., 2012). All the three perspectives have been used as indicators of sustainability of CBPs in this study.

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

This section presents the study conceptual framework and hypotheses. It also highlights the relationships between study constructs and variables. Figure 1 depicts this conceptual framework. The study argues that legal-political framework moderates the relationship between the participation of the CBPs members in project activities and the sustainability of CBPs.

Community Participation and sustainability of CBPs

There is robust literature available concerning influence of community participation and sustainability of CBPs. For example, Norberg et al. (2012), Kakaza (2009) and Pandey & Okazaki (2005) indicate that top-down and command-and-control approaches when used to manage the CBPs results to the CBPs failure. This results to communities, as the primary stakeholders and recipients of the direct impact of CBPs not being given the chance to participate in the decision making, implementation and management of CBPs' activities. According to the studies, failure to involve the community is as a results of the unwillingness of the exogenous stakeholders to let go of the CBPs processes. Similarly, Haq et al. (2014) and Buykx *et al.* (2012) showed that, CBPs outcome intensifies with community mobilization through effective awareness, training, use of extension workers, active community engagement and cost sharing. Likewise, Okungu (2008) observed that community contribution towards project capital costs, operation and maintenance of the CBPs positively influenced sustainability.

The literature reviewed indicate that community participation is a very important aspect of revitalization for any community venture. Without community acceptance and willingness to actively support and participate in CBPs, a project may never get off the ground or will not be accepted once it is completed. Community participation should be used to generate not only ideas for CBPs initiation and their implementation, but also viewpoints to further modify and advance existing CBPs features (Fu & Ma, 2020) . Community members may have concerns that, if incorporated into a CBP at the inception, may help to reduce the probability of challenges in the CBP outcome, and potential remediation or revitalization plans may be put in place. Madon et al. (2018) and Mansuri & Rao (2004) theorized that community participation in their projects makes the CBPs demand-driven and it should improve the match between what a community needs and what it obtains from the CBP. Based on empirical evidence, the following hypothesis was developed;



Hypothesis 1: *Community participation have a significant influence on sustainability of CBPs.*

Legal –Political Framework and Sustainability of CBPs

In relation to legal-political framework, Calfucura (2018) and Olukotun (2008) pinpointed two conditions that must be fulfilled for the projects sustainability to be achieved. First, there must be government support (state or local) for the initiation, execution and maintenance of CBPs. Secondly, the community leaders and CBPs coordinators must accept the challenge for projects' sustainability and carry the CBPs stakeholders along. These views corroborated findings in a study by Wang et al. (2016) who postulated that the government arouse local citizens to contribute financially and non-financially to the running of CBPs affairs, and get CBPs members as elected or appointed officials. Additionally, the government may encourage participation on voluntary basis within community development committees engaged in self-help projects.

On a facilitatory role, the assistance from the government can be in different forms. For instance, Nyström *et al.* (2014) avers that after the completion of a community project, a community would normally need resources which in some cases can only be secured through the government support. Villamayor-Tomas & García-López (2018) and Haider (2009) identified benefits of involving the government as a facilitator in community based projects: first, traditional leaders and government authorities that are excluded from community-based approaches may become obstacles to their successful implementation. Secondly, involving government dampens resistance and may lead to support for such activities and lastly, linking community-based projects to government policies and institutions can extend the viability of such projects and their subsequent sustainability. Conversely, Haider (2009) indicated government involvement in community projects has risks that cannot be ignored. For instance, once the government is involved, CBPs might become a part of government bureaucracy rather than an innovative, participatory and community owned venture. Additionally, government interference in CBPs decision making process may undermine community empowerment. Thus, on the basis of the emperical evidence, the current study hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 2: *The strength of the relationship between community participation and CBP sustainability is moderated by legal-political framework.*

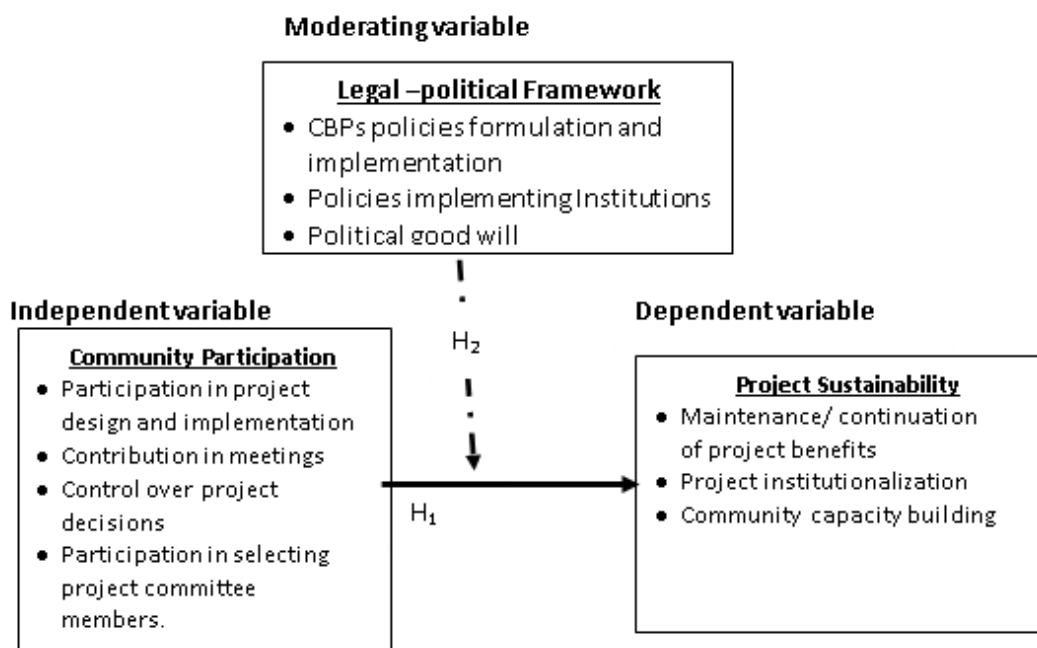


Figure 1: Study Conceptualization Model

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of the study was to examine the effect of community participation on the sustainability of community based projects. Additionally, the study investigated the interaction effect of legal-political framework (the moderating variable) in the relationship between community participation (the predictor variable) and sustainability of community projects (the explained variable). A mixed method research approach was employed in this study. As Creswell & Lark (2007) asserts, the mixed methods research approach provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone. Mixed method approach was appropriate in improving accuracy of the research as it allows triangulation for comparing and contrasting quantitative results with qualitative findings for substantiation and validation purposes.

Data for the study was collected using survey questionnaires and interview schedules. The choice for these methods was influenced by the research approach, the type of variables, the reliability and validity required, and the size of the target population. To collect quantitative data, participants in our survey were CBPs members who were dully registered and their bio data kept in the records under the custody of the Department of gender and Social Services, Nyeri County, Kenya. Using multistage cluster sampling technique and guided by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) model for determining sample sizes, 380 respondents out of 34098 registered CBPS members were selected from the six Sub-Counties of Nyeri County, Kenya, in a variety of 1861 registered CBPs. Multistage cluster sampling technique was preferred for study because respondents were selected from different geographical regions, in a variety of CBPs (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Out of 380 contacted respondents 308 positively responded to a survey questionnaire representing 81.1%. percent successful return rate. CBPs members were chosen because they carried out the activities of CBPs and were the beneficiaries of the CBPs.



For the qualitative aspect of the study, interviews were conducted on six (6) community projects regional coordinators both from the government agency in charge of community projects and non-governmental organizations who were purposively selected for the study. Purposive sampling involves selection of the units to be observed on the basis of knowledge of the phenomenon (Babbie, 2010). The community programmes regional coordinators were selected based on the knowledge and information they had pertaining the study phenomenon. The choice of Nyeri County, Kenya was prompted by fact that the study area is relatively a rural setting with minimum migration of residents making availability and accessibility of respondents easy. Quantitative as well as qualitative techniques were employed in the processing and analysis of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information of the Respondents

This was assessed in terms of gender, age, level of education and project activity for the CBPs members. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 2: Demographic information for the CBPs members

Categories of demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	134	43.5
Female	174	56.5
Total	308	100.0
Age of the respondent		
18 – 25	12	3.9
26– 35	76	24.7
36 – 45	94	30.5
46 – 55	63	20.5
56 and above	63	20.5
Total	308	100.0
Education		
High School	171	55.5
College certificate	46	14.9
Bachelor's degree	22	7.1
Post graduate degree	5	1.6
Others	64	20.8
Total	308	100.0
Project activity		
Agriculture	81	26.3
Group funding	71	23.1
Social welfare	156	50.6
Total	308	100.0

From table 1, the study revealed that (134) 43.5% of the respondents were male while (174) 56.5% were female. Even though the percentage of female respondents was higher than the percentage of male, the study indicated that both genders participated in giving views on CBPs. This indicates that the roles of both gender is being considered in the CBPs under this study. According to Huq (2012) one of the important principle of CBPs is to ensure broad-based social



inclusion and thus, gender could not have been ignored in this study. This was important to offset bias that would otherwise accrue as a result of different gender views on CBPs.

The demographic data on age indicated that majority of project members were in the 36-45 age group at 30.5%, followed by 26-35 age group at 24.7%. The lowest percentage was 3.9% held by those in 18-25 age group while 46-55 and 56 and above age groups had equal percentage at 20.5%. The implication of the distribution of the respondents ages is that over 50 percent were above 35 years of age, which represented a fairly aging members of CBPs. These findings corroborated the findings by Ceptureanu *et al.* (2018), Jaafar *et al.* (2015), Oladele (2012) and Harrill (2004) who reported that age had a significant moderating effect on community participation in development activities. Therefore, age plays a vital role in community participation in CBPs. The current study findings indicated that many youths are not involved in community-based projects. Consequently, a study by Ravhura (2010) indicates that lack of youth involvement in community-based projects may hinder the sustainability of the projects.

On the level of education, majority of the project members at 55.5% were high school leavers, followed by 20.8% with primary education. Only 1.6 % attained post graduate degree, 7.1% had bachelor's degree level of education while 14.9% had college level certificate. 55.5% with high school educational level could be attributed to the fact that secondary school education in the study area was then regarded better than primary school education, even if it did not signify educational completion. The second largest category consisted of primary school leavers at 20.8% who may not, as well, have completed the cycle. The results on level of education revealed that members of the community projects had the capacity to make valid and informed decisions on the impact on CBPs sustainability. John (2009) contended that educational level of the community had a significant correlation in the level of participation in community development projects.

Descriptive Analysis of Community Participation and Sustainability of CBPs

This section presented analysis of the influence of community participation on sustainability of CBPs. Community participation is identified as an independent variable predictive of the dependent variable-sustainability of CBPs. It was operationalized as the process by which communities are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues affecting them, making decisions over them and taking control over decisions made (Haq *et al.*, 2014; Sally *et al.*, 2013; Bamberger *et al.*, 2010; Harvey & Reed, 2007). In this study, community participation was measured by the participation of CBPs members in the planning and design of CBPs, members control over project decisions, attending and contribution in meetings and participation in selecting project committee members. Community participation was anchored in the ladder of community participation Theory. This theory has been the basis of design of many projects that incorporate community participation as a key strategy in ensuring sustainability. Based on this theory, many projects have inbuilt designs with varying levels of community participation. The level of participation is informed by the sensitivity of the projects or their intended performance upon closure of funding phase (Khwaja, 2004)

For descriptive analysis, this subsection investigated the adequacy and strength of community participation in CBPs by evaluating the questionnaire items explicating the variable. It specifically evaluated the means of theme wise items, the mean of composite scores and the respondents' perception on adequacy of community participation in CBPs of questionnaires items.



The results were presented in Table 3

Table 3: CBPs Members Opinions on Community Participation

Description	Frequencies and percentages						Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA	N		
Participation in CBP planning and design	8	7	15	116	160	306	4.36	0.87
	2.5%	2.1%	4.7%	37.8%	52.0%	99.3%		
Attendance and contribution in meetings	7	5	18	135	141	307	4.30	0.84
	2.4%	1.6%	5.9%	43.9%	45.6%	99.5%		
Control over CBP decisions	8	9	19	138	132	306	4.24	0.89
	2.6%	2.9%	6.0%	44.9%	42.9%	99.3%		
Participation in selecting CBP committee	4	12	24	126	141	306	4.26	0.86
	1.3%	3.9%	7.8%	40.8%	45.6%	99.3%		
Composite mean							4.29	0.87

SD= strongly disagree; D= disagree; N = neutral; A = Agree; SA = strongly Agree N= Number of responses; SD = standard deviation

These findings showed that majority of the CBPs members participated in initiation of CBPs with a mean scores of 4.36, attendance of meeting and contribution during meetings followed with a mean score of 4.30. Participation in control over decisions had the lowest means scores at 4.24, while Participation in selecting CBP committee had a mean score of 4.26. From the results there was a clear indication of active project's members' participation in CBPs.

These findings corroborate the findings of a study by Marais (2010) which indicated that the degree to which stakeholders, including beneficiaries, participate in the project design, development and execution is one of the factors that determine the long-term development impact of a community project. Therefore, sustainability of CBPs is linked to community inclusiveness and consultation.

Interviews conducted suggested that the level of participation in CBPs activities by project members was generally good,

"We ensure active participation of members by engaging these members in meetings and we also sermon the members randomly to enquire about their group activities". Kieni Sub-County SDO.

"Community members initiate a majority of the projects, but even if an outside agent floats a project idea, members must give a nod to its initiation. CBOs meeting attendances are satisfactory. Kieni Region CBOs coordinator.

This was confirmed in other studies that show that community participation in project decision-making, particularly at the planning stage, contributes to project sustainability. For instance, a study by Pandey& Okazaki (2005) demonstrates that the origination and initiation phase, in which major decisions on project objectives and planning for a project's execution are made, has a significant influence on the project's success and consequently sustainability.

To ensure equal participation by all members in a CBP, an interviewee pointed out that:



“To encourage participation of members in the CBPs, we the programme coordinators advise the project leadership to give each member a role as stipulated in their CBP constitution”. Kieni Sub-County SDO.

To ensure active participation in the CBPs activities by all members, an interview respondent observed that,

“There has been a challenge in ensuring activate participation by all members but we try to organize a rotational kind of participation in which members change positions/roles in the CBPs. For example, in one meeting a member chairs and the next meeting he/she takes up another role and the previous role is played by another member. This way every member becomes active and feels appreciated”. ACK Programmes Coordinator

Participation in decision making through attendance and contributions in meetings as well as control over CBPs decisions and selection of project leaders by members is seen as a crucial contributor to sustainability. Previous studies are in agreement that participation in decision-making by the intended beneficiary influences project outcomes like project sustainability (Olukotun, 2008; McConville & Mihelcic, 2007; Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Khwaja, 2004; Isham *et al.*, 1992). Validating this observation, an interviewee had this to say,

“First for a CBP to be successful it needs to have governing principles. The members are then sensitized about the principles such as; accountability, ownership, governance and transparency. Without these principles the community group cannot succeed”. Kieni Sub-County SDO.

Another interviewee observed that CBPs leaders are not imposed to the members by coordinating bodies rather, the members are guided and given free way on electing their leaders,

“As government agents, what we do is outline the qualities of the kind of leaders we want to see spearheading the activities of the CBPs. We also offer advice on how to elect CBPs leadership as stipulated in the government policies and the constitution of Kenya”. Nyeri South Sub-County SDO.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted using Pearson Product Correlation r to explore the strength and direction of the relationship between the predictor variables and predicted variable. This was done by checking the positive and negative value of before r . The strength and the direction of the relationship was evaluated by looking at the value of r as recommended by John (2009) with a rank of $0.3 < r \leq 0.50$ implying a moderate positive correlation. Since the variables were measured on a Likert scale, Pearson product correlation was used and the relationship were determined at 95% confidence level. This implied that the sample proportion p less or equal to 0.05 was statistically significant. Table 4 showed the correlation between the predictor variable and the predicted variable. The results indicated that there was significant moderate positive relationship between community participation and sustainability of CBPs (r (298) = 0.480, $p=0.00 < \alpha=0.05$).

Table 4: Correlation of the Sustainability of CBPs and Community Participation

Sustainability	Community Participation
Pearson Correlation 1	



Sig. (2-tailed)
N 305

Community participation	Pearson Correlation	.480**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	303

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

The results showed that community participation was perceived to contribute to sustainability. The positive moderate correlation between community participation in CBPs and sustainability implied that this variable is not only important but had influence on sustainability of CBPs. These results were consistent the findings of Alelah & Mueke (2017), who assessed sustainability of water and sanitation projects in Rhonda Slum, Kenya.

The results in Table 4 indicated that there was significant moderate positive relationship between legal- political framework and sustainability of CBPs ($r(300) = 0.27$, $p = 0.00 < \alpha = 0.05$). This indicated that from CBPs members' opinion, legal-political framework had an influence on the sustainability of CBPs.

Table 5: Correlation of the Sustainability of CBPs and legal political framework

		SustainabilityLegal political	
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	305	
Legal	Pearson Correlation	.327**	1
Political	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	302	304

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

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out to establish statistical significance of the relationship between the predictor variable, and the predicted variable. This was in addition to establishing the moderating effect on the relationship between the predictor variable, and the predicted variable. Hypotheses related to the research model were tested with both the quantitative and qualitative components of the research. In this section, the findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study were presented and discussed.

Relationship between Community participation and Sustainability of CBPs

Literature reviewed and theoretical reasoning in this study associated community participation with sustainability of CBPs. Thus, the study hypothesized that,

Hypothesis 1: *Community participation has a significant influence on sustainability of community based projects.*

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict sustainability of CBPs based upon community participation. Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure there was no violation of assumption of normality and linearity. Table 6 and Table 7 showed the results of the simple linear regression test.

**Table 6: Community Participation and Sustainability**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics		
						F Change	df1df2	Sig. F Change
1 CBPs members	.489a	.239	.237	.8736	.239	96.292	1 306	.000
Predictors: (Constant), Community Participation								

Table 7: Coefficients of Community Participation

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
CBPs members	(Constant)	.002	.051			.034	.973
	Community Participation	.477	.050	.480		9.455	.000
Dependent Variable: Sustainability							

From Table 6, the final simple linear regression models $Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$ can be explained as;

$$Y = 0.02 + .477X_1$$

Where

Y = Sustainability

X_1 = Community participation.

H_1 assumed a significant influence of community participation on sustainability of CBPs. A statistically significant regression equations were found, $F(1, 298) = 89.403$, $p < .001$ with adjusted R^2 of .229. This indicated that 22.9 % of the variance in sustainability of CBPs could be explained by community participation. With $\beta = .477$ sustainability of CBPs increased by 47.7 % for a unit increase in community participation. Community participation predicted sustainability of CBPs, $t = 9.455$, $p < 0.001 < \alpha = .05$. Therefore, accepting H_1 and rejecting the null hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis on Moderating Influence of Legal-political Framework

The second objective was designed to establish whether an interaction effect existed when the effect of community participation on the dependent variable changed, depending on the value(s) of the moderating variable (legal-political framework).

There are different statistical analysis that can be used to measure and test the differential effects of a moderator variable, depending on the type (level) of the variable (Kim *et al.*, 2001). The study employed regression analysis to test for the moderating influence of legal-political framework. This statistical test was found suitable because the predictor and the moderator variables were interval in nature (Kim *et al.*, 2001). To reduce the problem of multicollinearity when using a regression model, the predictor and the moderator variables were centered as prescribed by Kim *et al.* (2001) and Aldwin (1994).

The study tested the hypothesis which was stated as:

Hypothesis 2: *The strength of the relationship between community participation and CBP sustainability is moderated by legal-political framework.*

The corresponding mathematical models for the hypotheses were identified as follows:



$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \text{ (without interaction)}$$

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 (X_1 * X_2) + \varepsilon \text{ (with interaction)}$$

Y = Sustainability of community based projects

α = Y- intercept (the constant term)

β_1 = The coefficient of the first independent variable

β_2 = The coefficient of the moderating variable

X_1 = Community participation

X_2 = Legal-political framework

A regression model was calculated to assess the ability of legal-political framework to moderate for the influence of community participation on sustainability of CBPs. Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure there was no violation of assumption of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity.

Two regression models in the analysis were used. Model 1 comprised a regression of the exogenous variable (community participation) with sustainability of CBPs. Models 2 used the variable in model 1 plus legal-political framework as the moderating variable. The analysis was based on the statistically significant and change in coefficient of determination (R squared) value. The decision criterion was that, if the interaction term was statistically significant, the interaction term was probably important. And if the coefficient of determination (R squared value) was also much bigger with the interaction term, it was definitely important. If neither of these outcomes were observed, the interaction term could be removed from the regression equation (Faraway, 2002). The results of the analysis are given in Table 8.

Table 8: Regression Results for Interaction Effects

Variable	Analytical output			
	<i>P – value</i>		Coefficient of determination (R^2)	
	Without interaction	With interaction	Without interaction	With interaction
Community participation	.000	.001	.253	.278

H_2 : envisioned that the strength of the relationship between community participation and CBP sustainability was moderated by legal-political framework. The interaction term was statistically significant for community participation ($p = .001 < \alpha = 0.05$) and R^2 was bigger with the interaction term than without it (0 .278 versus .273) thus supporting H_2 .

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study objectives sought to establish the extent to which community participation influenced sustainability of community based projects and the moderating effect of legal-political framework on the relationship between community participation and sustainability of CBPs. The study established that community participation influenced sustainability of community based projects. The study observed that community participated in CBPs planning and design, decisions control and selection of CBPs leadership. The study noted that these types of participation boosted project performance and which could eventually lead to sustainability of CBPs. The study established that there was a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between community participation and sustainability of CBPs. This indicated that an



increase in community participation increased the level of sustainability of CBPs. These findings resonated with the findings of Madajewicz *et al.* (2014), Riddell (2013) and Mansuri & Rao (2004) who in their studies concluded that participation in CBPs gives opportunities to local people to own and have control over their project. As Aga *et al.* (2017) posits, an individual who has intimate knowledge of and familiarity with a project's initiation, design, mode of implementation, decision control and control over leadership have strong psychological ownership to that project and this could eventually lead to projects sustainability.

CBPs should endeavor to strength community participation through promotional activities, involvement of community champions, aggressive community engagement in project activities in order to achieve the highest possible level of participation. There should be concerted efforts towards strengthening community participation in CBPs development now that it is realized that it is a strategy to transform communities cultural, economically, socially and environmentally. There is need to mobilize and create awareness of the importance of community participation for CBPs sustainability through mass media, social media, field days, exposure visits, intra-group visits, seminars and workshops. Further, the study advocates for tapping the creative potentials within the communities setting in terms of the talents, skills and resource endowment towards changing the communities' ecological, economic and social environment for the better. This studies inference agreed with the sentiments envisaged in the National Policy of Kenya on Community Development (2017) "the government of Kenya shall promote and facilitate the application of participatory approaches in community development, with the policy objective being to strengthen the capacities of communities and development actors for effective participation and implementation of programmes and projects"

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