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**Madubwe, A. A., & Iravo, M.**

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**Madubwe, A. A.,<sup>\*1</sup> & Iravo, M.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>\*1</sup> Masters Scholar, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology [JKUAT], Nairobi, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Prof., Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology [JKUAT], Nairobi, Kenya

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**ABSTRACT**

*The objective of this study was to establish the Influence of Citizen Participation on the performance of Makueni County. The study adopted Simple random and purposive research design and the researcher targeted 530 respondents from the county. The sample size for the study was 530 respondents. This comprised of Makueni County Ministries, The Public service board, constituencies, Sub-county wards. For the 10 County Ministries, 10 respondents were sampled from each ministry. These included the Ministry of Water, irrigation and Environment services, Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Education and ICT. Others were the ministry of Finance and Social – Economic Planning, Health services, Lands, Mining and physical planning, Roads, Transport and Infrastructure, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Tourism and Co-operatives and the ministry of Youth, Gender, sports and social services. For the Public service board, a sample of 5 respondents was selected for the study. For the 6 constituencies, a sample of 100 citizens was selected for the study. The constituencies included Kaiti, Kibwezi East, Kilome, Makueni, Mbooni and Kibwezi West constituencies. For the Six sub-counties of Makueni, Mbooni, Kaiti, Kibwezi East, Kibwezi West and Kilome a sample of 10 respondents from each sub-county ward was interviewed. The quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics which included frequency distribution tables and measures of central tendency (the mean), measures of variability (standard deviation) and measures of relative frequencies. The inferential statistics included a regression model which established the relationship between variables. Data was analyzed by the use of a statistical software SPSS.*

**Key Words:** E-Participation, E-Petition, Localism, Civic Education Structures, Information Dissemination mechanisms, Makueni County Government

## INTRODUCTION

There have been various reforms that led to the aborigins of citizen participation on government performance globally (Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014). For instance, during development of democracy in Eastern and Central Europe, each citizen started believing that politicians whom they elected as their representatives addressed their best interests and concerns aimed at improving living standards and local community welfares (Kithome 2015). According to Vatn (2015), this was increasingly vital at all levels of municipal governments where service delivery efficiency and effectiveness was acute with lack of citizen accessibility, transparency in decision making processes. There were also problem of corruption which inhibited improved governance processes and decreased likelihood for economic and social improvements (Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014).

Vatn (2015) opined that various local governance bodies and civil society representatives throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) took an active approach by implementing different mechanisms of citizen participation in order to pursue delivery of efficient government services. During Yaremche international conference in Ukraine from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2001 established under the project of auspice of the voice of the People's Voice created a perfect opportunity for citizens to share methodologies, individual problems encountered and, most vitally, their work results. The Ukrainian conference invited about nine participants from seventeen different Central and Eastern Europe. They also showcased a wide spectrum of various guidelines, approaches and strategies (Kithome 2015).

World nations also varied greatly in regards to citizen information access laws. For example, In Sweden there was an introduction of the initial laws

regarding the subject in 1766. On the other hand, in 1951, Finland became the first nation to adopt the modern mechanism for citizen participatory legislation. Later in 1966, the United States followed with an act on Freedom of Information. Between 1980 to 2001, Poland, Austria, Netherlands and Hungary had legislations on the subject and had enshrined citizen rights to information access within the constitutions (KerstingandVetter,2013).

Across Africa, there are various regional perspectives on the influence of citizens' participation on government performance across Africa. The perspective involves public involvement as Electronic governance and participation which has formed a very significant phase in the development of different processes of governance (Kithome 2015). Most countries in West Africa experience various challenges in enhancing efficient citizen participatory mechanisms. This is due to the unequal and limited access to adequate legal frameworks, electronic fraud, lack of ICTs and infrastructure. Due to this problem, most governments are taking up various initiatives to establish mechanisms for citizen participation using different methods as ICTs for effective development across African countries. Most states have also put up measures aimed at transforming the relationships with the citizens through their services. The state civil societies are also in full commitment to implement many initiatives aimed at fostering democratic systems of governance, particularly through ICT. The initiatives are also aimed at encouraging genuine participation of citizens in the processes of decision-making. According to Kithome (2015), global citizen participation is way still at an infancy level and is mainly of small-scale existence.

Oduor (2015) posits that for many years before 2010 devolution system, Kenyans were never fully incorporated within the national governance

processes. The national government continued to struggle in order to meet various needs of the population that continued to rapidly grow. The circumstances persisted despite the several global and national initiatives put in place to mitigate the impacts of the adversities. In fact, for the most parts of the country, the experiences had been so regressive. Consequently, Kenya had to acquire a new mechanism of resolving and tackling the adversity (Oduor, 2015). In addition, the Kenyan Constitution review act 2000 enforced CKRC to incorporate participation of the people through power devolution. It also required respect to be upheld for regional and ethnic diversity. It also fostered communal rights as community rights to organize and take part in various cultural events and identity expression (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The body was also required to review places of the local governments, the local authority devolution power degree and unitary and federal systems options. Like the 47 counties that continued to face the challenge of ensuring total citizen participation within the devolved governance systems, Makueni County has continued to devolve its governance to the people as a mechanism of promoting the national government development agenda (Opiyo et.al, 2017).

The county of Makueni has a total population of about 1million. To the western part, it borders the county of Kajiado and Taita Taveta to the Southern sides, county of Kitui towards the East and Machakos towards North. It is divided into 6 sub-counties as Mbooni, Makueni, Kibwezi East, Kaiti, Kilome and Kibwezi West (Kahindi, 2013). Makueni County is famous in horticulture community-based water management projects as dams, boreholes and irrigation schemes which act as agricultural boosters (Kithome, 2015). It also has a progressive administrative authority which lays its focus on delivery of services and continuum modes of

investment (Brownhill, Moturi and Hickey, 2016). The County has embraced devolution primarily through involvement of the citizens. The county government has also developed an objective of empowering citizens by engaging them in the development projects locally. The governance of the county has also established a major obligation to ensure the locals are aware of their greatest responsibility in taking an active role in the successful governance and development of the county.

In the opinion of Kithome (2015), performance of county government frameworks are significantly influenced by public participation as is the requirement by the constitution. In Article 1, it states that the people have sovereign powers. In Article 10,2a and schedule Four Part 2 Section 14 of Constitution of Kenya (2010), there is a clear stipulation of the county government functions. In County Governments Act, 2012 Section 87 through to 92 and 115, the public participation principles are vividly outlined, and an imperative for facilitation of public participation in County government works. Government Performance based on public participation would be a vital structure and mechanism for making consultations with groups, entities, and persons before making any decisions. It would be designed to offer voices to voiceless and aid in cementing concepts of County Government agencies. Through these mechanisms, the County governments would become agents of the citizens. The government performance implementation structures void of public participatory frameworks should never be meant to act as the conveyance of decisions once made, but rather should be the core of generating and confirming of decisions. Also, it should not become like a political process but should instead become a non-partisan procedure that would involve the agents taking instructions and directions from the citizens (Brownhill, Moturi and Hickey, 2016).

## Statement of the Problem

Effective Citizen Participation has impacted on various government performances in many countries globally. It is claimed that there is existence of relationship between citizen participation and performance of county governments in regards to (Oduor, 2015, Opiyo et.al, 2017, Bratton, 2012). For instance, in the opinion of Oduor, (2015), Makueni County has established various core public participation mechanisms. First, is the participation opportunity in decision making in regards to county prioritization and identification of budget allocation and development projects by the public and interest groups. Secondly, the county has established Project Management Committees to enhance public participation. The third public participation component involves giving opportunities first to the locals to provide the required services and goods (Oduor, (2015).

However various gaps exist in the study by Oduor, (2015) which justify the current study. Firstly, dissemination of information in Makueni County through print and electronic media, interlocutors, and internet. Apart from information that gets disseminated through electronic media and interlocutors; a huge gap exists in the prints and internet based platforms since they are inaccessible to most rural and poor communities within the county (Opiyo et.al, 2017). This study will, therefore, reveal various effective ways to facilitate public participation across the county through public participatory functional structures that would improve the dissemination of information even through the rural and poor communities. The current study will reveal various ways in which the County government will enlist various resource persons to carry out need assessments and community profiling, the organization of short courses and seminars for community on public participation. The other gap as posted by Oduor,

(2015) is the fact that huge population is still less informed in regards to their civic duties, rights and responsibilities and duties of the county government. This study, therefore, established the best structures for rolling out Civic education across the county continuously and consistently. The study brought out how the County governments would build public officers 'capacities on matters of social accountability as participatory methodologies and decision-making processes.

## Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study will be to establish the influence of Citizen Participation on the Performance of Makueni County government in Kenya. The specific objectives were:-

- To determine the influences of E-participation on performance of Makueni county government in Kenya
- To investigate the effects of E-petition on performance of Makueni county government
- To investigate the influence of Localism on performance of Makueni county government in Kenya
- To investigate the effects of civic education structures on the performance of Makueni county government in Kenya
- To evaluate the effects of Information Dissemination Mechanisms on the performance of Makueni county government in Kenya

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

#### The Theory of Public Management

The theory was proposed by Hood in 1991. The theory is essential in outlining the underlying factors behind impacts of citizen engagement in various governance structures. The new public

management indicates how public sectors would open up to the influences of greater private sectors and thus influencing various government performances. The new public management theory framework reforms aims at the improvement of public service quality, saving of public expenditures, increasing operation efficiency of Makueni county government, and improving the policy implementation mechanism (Delwiche and Henderson, 2012). The beliefs that a monopolistic and vast public bureaucracy would be inherently inefficient will be a critical force that would drive the emerging new public management frameworks. This theory will represent various sets of values, practices, and ideas focused on emulation of various practices of private sectors within public sectors. In the opinion of Asha, (2014), there would be the need for government reinvention and harness entrepreneurial spirits as a means of transforming public sectors and later banishing bureaucracies. The new public management theory builds its intellectual foundation from the public choice theory, which views the government from productivity and market and managerialism standpoints which focus on various approaches for management for achieving a productivity gain. Three major issues which the theory aims at resolving include taxpayers' money value, citizen-based services and public service workforce that is responsive (Osborne, Radnor and Nasi, 2013).

Some studies indicate that the need for all new public management reforms to advance improvement of delivery of services. For instance, as governments attempted to provide improve health-care services for less in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and United Kingdom, the new public management brought about greater inequities and great bureaucracy in certain nations. Competition, a crucial feature of the theory, never necessarily led to an improved health outcome, unlike the operations in most sectors, application of

the theory in health care sectors would mean large providers as hospitals and insurers, hospitals and regulations remaining stable (Baguma,2014). The theory of new public management would often be mentioned alongside governance. The governance would be an overarching government structure and overall strategy set up, whereas new public management would be the operational aspects of the new form of public administration. The theory would receive support from those contending that new public management dominant themes would be based on the usage of market techniques in the improvement of the public sector performance. Notably, the major features of new public management would include e-governance, performance management, decentralization, outsourcing, accountability and contracting out (Asha, 2014).

There are various criticisms of the new public management theory over many short comings. First, the theory introduced a centralization paradox through the process of decentralization. Whenever public managers are given more authority over various programs, there would be a decision-making process that is concentrated (Delwiche and Henderson, 2012). Therefore, new public management would result into the public managers making centralized decisions, other than encouraging public organizations to adopt decentralization as per the claims. The other criticism is focused on the application of techniques of private sector management to public sectors. Whereas new public management would encourage the adoption of techniques of private sector management, there would be various risks related to the adoption of certain practices within private sectors. Most academic commentators argue that many administration and public service and areas have very distinct ethical, political, social and constitutional dimensions, and the factors would make public sectors different from private sectors

(Christopher and Annette, 2015). Lastly, the theory is founded on the application of market principles to the public policies and management. The local governments of developing nations would mostly have little experiences within market operations (Asha, 2014). Basic management infrastructure within developing nations would never be sufficient in supporting the market-centered reforms. , there would be different factors which would be required before markets could become effective (Osborne, Radnor and Nasi, 2013).

There would be a four government developmental stage for user-centric perspectives. The stages would include a one-way information flow, two-way interactions, democracy and payment transactions (Osborne, Radnor and Nasi, 2013). The theory helps to define the extents to which a capability, resource, opportunity, and competence of the impacts of Citizen Participation would benefit the performance of Makueni County government.

### **The Civic Voluntarism Theory**

The civic voluntarism theory is anchored upon the civic education and its influence on the citizens' involvement in the development of the locality. This theory civic pioneered in the United States by Norman Nie and Sidney Verba in 1972, helps in understanding citizen participation after or before acquisition of civic knowledge. Subsequently, it has been used to explain importance of citizen participation in some countries to improving the government performance. According to the theory, there are three major ideas that explains reasons for or against citizen participation in the county or their areas of governance. Lack of citizens' participation can be explained to be brought about by lack of capacity to do task, limited opportunities and lack of citizen involvement. Inability is defined by factors such as money, time and civic skills. On the other hand, limited opportunities are determined by citizen perception about the

effectiveness of their governance. The level of education and awareness about governance would have a great influence on this perception. Lack of involvement springs from the feeling of being left out among the citizens in the various activities government processes. In regards to the theory, citizens having more resources would participate more; the resources would be the products of education and family social structures as opined by Cornelissen and Cornelissen (2017). The theory model indicates that the socioeconomic status of citizens as income, work and education would determine the citizen participation levels. The empirical typology of the theoretical model would show how developed the different modes of every participating citizen and classification done into six various categories depending on the types of participatory activities performed. In regards to the classification, we would have inactive people with little participation within the categories that are dominated by the elderly, women and those with low socioeconomic status. However, among active citizens, there is a substantial presence of the middle age married men, with very high education levels of education income and active social life. Most community members, who get mixed up intermittently within any political event and social interest issues but never permanently intruding (Nygård and Jakobsson, 2013).

The theory faces various criticisms. For instance, the theory has a belief that socioeconomic status would predict civic participatory levels. , there would be cases where people with a very high socioeconomic resource level would not be interested in participating. The major failure of the theory would be that it would not explain why large numbers of people with high socioeconomic status would not get involved in the political systems. For instance, in societies with advanced industrializations levels, with increased education and wealth levels, there would be no correlations between the citizen

participation and increase in status. The second weakness of the theory is failing to provide coherent relationships between participation and every socioeconomic variable (Delwiche and Henderson, 2012). The theory could, therefore, help in explaining citizen participation hence would be significant in defining the mitigatory mechanisms to the various challenges facing citizen participation in policy and governance systems in Makueni County.

### **The Equity-Fairness Theory**

This is an important theory in the understanding of the participation of citizens' in the county management. This theory explains the participation of the citizens and the effects of localism in the governance of the county. The theory explains that motivation is an important factor in the determination of participation of the citizens. The equity-fairness Theory was developed by John Stacy Adams in 1962. This theory would be significant in explaining how citizens would get motivated to participate in various government roles. The theory states that the citizens in various governments would form estimates of how their total benefits from job payments, interests and status would compare with the total inputs as skills, effort, and experiences. The ratio would then get compared with similar work from other people. If the latter comparisons became unfavorable, the individual motivations would suffer (Nabatchi, 2012). The theory focuses on how various factors would influence the levels of citizen participations. Such factors include traditional sociological assessments, which consider that societies would get divided into various groups competing hence poor performance impacts to the governments. The major ideas of the theory are that citizens would have cross group comparisons. In the event that the comparisons would be of unfavorable outcomes in their life expectations, frustrations and political aggressions would occur. This would further which cause

citizens to mobilize a demand for better engagement environments. For instance, whenever citizens would increase their participatory efforts, with so many forces pulling them back, they would be frustrated and would likely give up on their participatory efforts in various governance systems (Delwiche and Henderson, 2012).

The theory has various criticisms. First, there are certain doubts on its relevance in explaining forms of conventional participations as voting and the reasons why the public join various parties. It would likely be that the citizens, who get frustrated through their situations, would vote against parties deemed as guilty, but it could happen otherwise, that would be to say, that given public political disappointments, they would decide never to participate. The theory could, therefore, be appreciated as it proclaims that citizen participation in governance performance is highly motivated by the resources (Bryson, Crosby and Bloomberg, 2014).

### **The Social Capital Theory**

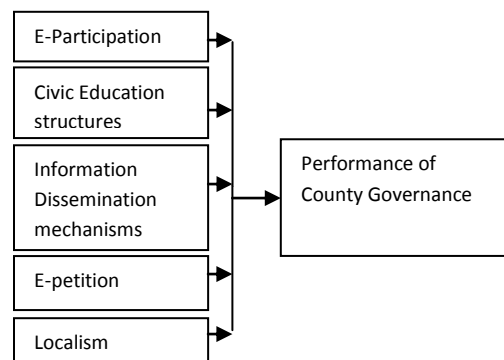
The social capital theory was coined in 1832 by Tocqueville. The theory discusses how the interactions and engagements between citizens within different government structures generate an increased performance levels such as social capital and interpersonal trust development. The major idea, in theory, is that trust between the citizens would determine how citizens would work together in finding the solutions to various governance problems. The social capital would be established the organization's social trait as social network, norm, and trust that would provide efficiencies to the societies through the facilitation of coordinated actions. According to the theory, a trust would, therefore, become the major generator and indicator of social capital, since it would allow people to take part in the activities in the government processes together. The various group



actions would be characterized by a high social capital level and an extensive citizen participation social network. This would in the lead to better service delivery as education and health services and high citizen participatory levels (Nygård et.al, 2015).

The theoretical model has various criticisms. For instance, it has received the major criticism that has postulated that citizen participation in non-political activity would not contribute to making citizens aware of their public affairs and generating political and social capital. The participation would facilitate benefits and cooperation for the democratic functions, yet the simple associations' social interaction would not be sufficient in promoting various behaviors and democratic attitudes. The other criticism the theory has received is on the issue that it denies influences of participation incentives, as problems of explaining the reasons why, when societies are characterized by high social capital levels that would make cooperations between citizens, there would be participation by just few citizens (Nygård et.al, 2015). This would establish influence the Citizen Participation on the various Performance of Makueni county governments.

### Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables      Dependent Variable

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### E-participation and Performance of County Governments

E-Participation is an ICT-supported citizen participation process in various governance and governance systems (Zanello and Maassen, 2011). The processes would concern service delivery, administration and decision making. The members of county assembly play a significant role in ICT and infrastructure development. The county governments as Makueni are quickly adopting various mechanisms and policies that involve individual citizen e-participation involvement as Electronic governance and e-participation which has formed a very significant phase in the development of different processes of governance (Milakovich, 2012). In Makueni County, there have been indications of preferences of various interaction frameworks between individual citizens and the county government. This has led to the need of developing more interactive platforms of interactions through highly developed ICT systems. There has been a challenge to get public a customization on ICT system usage. The individual county citizen users have long desired accessibility of relevant information. However, lack of sufficient funds has led to low level of success in rate of ICT tools. It has faced infrastructural challenges as insufficient funds and literacy in ICT systems. The ICT frameworks should employ the use of Social media as a way of increasing the citizen communication space. This would serve as open viewpoint and diverse forums which would further establish the individual citizen e-participatory mechanisms (Zanello and Maassen, 2011). The civic voluntarism theory helps to gain a better understanding on how citizens' willing participation can enhance performance. In situations where more citizens would be volunteering to be part of the activities of the county government, it is obvious that performance of the county would tremendously increase.

### **Civic Education Structures and Performance of County Governments**

Civic education structures have impacted the performance of county governments in various ways (Morse, 2012). For instance; the County Executive committees have played various vital roles in citizen education developments. County Executive Committees (CECs) members for the finance unit should be responsible for the participation of the citizen in budgeting and planning (Government of Kenya, 2010), PFMA Sec 125.18. In regards to the report and mandate of Government of Kenya (2010), CGA Art. 196, the county governance should enforce all constitutional requirements for the success of decentralization. They should conduct their activities publicly and openly to facilitate the involvement of citizen in their forums and committees through well-structured education programs (Rabya and Abraham, 2015). The county assembly members should maintain very close contacts with electorates and consult them on various issues under the assembly discussion in county assembly (Government of Kenya, 2010), CGA Section 9:1. The County Government should establish mechanisms, guidelines, and education structures that fosters participation of citizens. It should further ensure that there is open participation without any discrimination as well as develop safeguard measures against consultation domination by individual groups whether elites or politicians (Government of Kenya, 2010), CGA Section 115.3. Every assembly in the counties should develop regulations and laws that give effect to effective public participation requirements in the development of performance, planning, and public education management across the county (Rabya and Abraham (2015)., such types of guidelines and laws should be in adherence to minimum state requirements (Government of Kenya, 2010), CGA Section 115, 2) and 473.

### **Information Dissemination Mechanisms and Performance of County Governments**

The Information dissemination is key to creating awareness among the public on the participatory roles in the performance of various governance systems (Oduor, 2015). For instance in Makueni County, the government established and passed a policy on County Disclosure and Communications in September 2013. The Policy stated that the County government was obligated to provide its citizens with accurate, timely, objective, clear and complete information about the policies, services, programs, and initiatives. It further stated that the county government was committed to providing consistent, timely and fair disclosure of information from the County Government to enable informed and orderly decisions by all the interested parties and investors. According to Oduor, (2015) the county governments should set broad frameworks and policies for disclosure of County Government information to the citizens and third parties through different communication platforms and channels. The policies should be in harmony with County Government values of respect for fairness and integrity and good governance disclosure. The county governments through the values should apply transparency, accountability, and impartiality internally and externally while discharging of their statutory mandates, and in the promotion of communication and dissemination of information (Klopp et.al, 2013). Information dissemination is part management duty and is thus well described by the public management theory. The management helps to efficiently facilitate public participation, the county governments should use the county civic education and administrative functional structures to disseminate information (Manoharan, 2012). Official communication should be sent through various Sub- County Administrators and Ward Administrators (Rabya and Abraham, 2015). The Members of County Assemblies would be involved in disseminating information.

Moreover, the county governments should use a quarterly newsletter to pass specific and vital county welfare information on what the governments have implemented in different sectors. The Magazine would provide sections for the public views and letters. In addition, the County Government should sponsor various radio talk shows on the radio stations where different sectors as Agriculture sectors would actively provide information through the programs. Various social media platforms established by the county government press services as leading social media platforms as Face book and Governor Press Service would play the vital role in information dissemination. The information dissemination in the County would be further established through interlocutors, print and electronic media and internet based websites and social media platforms (Bertot, Jaeger and Hansen, 2012).

#### **E-petition and Performance of County Governments**

E-petitions are forms of a petition which are signed online, often through forms on websites. Basically, after getting sufficient signatories, resulting letters would be delivered to the petition subjects, often through e-mail (Bochel, Bochel and Pool, 2015). The petitions would allow citizens to protest any causes, as stopping constructions or closure of various unwanted projects. In regards to the case study of Christopher and Annette (2015), under the devolved county governments, the county and national governments have set up various guidelines and clear standards that have continued to enhance citizen e-petition. There is however need to equip various counties with the powers to disseminate very reliable and updated information concerning the priorities of county budgets, plans, and expenditure through various channels. The equipped counties would manage to structure processes for consultation on county plans, budgets, and laws (Nabatchi, 2012).

#### **Localism and Performance of County Governments**

Localism is the attachment to particular local places a feeling or a policy which emphasizes local phenomena (Lawton and Macaulay, 2014). According to the case study of Christopher and Annette (2015), in Kenya, there has been a crucial need for county governance systems to establish individual citizen localism policies that would meet diverse criteria. First, the various processes should be able to serve clear purposes as resource allocation, project oversights and service improvement and delivery. Secondly, they should have clear, detailed steps. They should ensure governments do not ignore the citizens, requiring justification of the public on the various decisions taken contrary to their demand based on their localism (Lawton and Macaulay, 2014). Localism policies should be transparent to enable citizens to know how to engage and understand the consideration of their input (Bryson, Crosby and Bloomberg, 2014). There would be the great need for the provision of guidelines for work across boundaries of government civil societies and administrations to enhance mobilizing and training. The county governments would succeed independently in making up active processes based on the various localism policies. They would require the support of citizen mobilization, training citizens as well as project and program technical oversights. The cooperation would be vital from various local actors. For instance, the chief and the village elders would form part of important actors. The other actors would include civil societies, as NGOs, CBOs, trade unions, media and religious groups and organizations (World Bank, 2015). This is similar to what happens in the social capital theory in which different structures of governance help to enhance citizen participation and increase the development within the county

## **Performance of County Governments**

Measuring the performance of Makueni County Government shall be supported by the concepts of access to resources, access to health and access to education. The study shall evaluate the sustainability, productivity and empowerment of the development projects in Makueni County.

The study shall utilize some of concepts used in measuring Human Development Index (HDI) such as health, income, and education to measure various aspects of economic development as outlined in the questionnaire.

## **Empirical Review**

### **E-participation**

Pardoand Burke, (2012) carried a study on E-government interoperability. They focused on the Interaction of policy, management, and technology dimensions. This article used a framework for the creation of new understanding about the mix of diverse, interdependent and interacting sociotechnical interoperability dimensions. The study first conceptualized e-government interoperability. The conceptualization then drew on four relevant literature enterprise architecture, information sharing, capability maturity, and information systems. Second, the study presented the e-government interoperability capability frameworks, composed of capability categories needed for the creation of more interoperable governance, and then it focused on the specific capabilities within every framework category. It then drew out its findings based on the conclusion on the implications of the research and practice frameworks. This study established that through E-government structures, E-participation in governance would become a significant strategy for the improvement of government services and effective public programs and policies. The study found out that a crucial component of the e-participation initiative was the ability of various

governments and nongovernment organizations to integrate and share information across their organizational sectors through well-structured ICT programs. E-participation ability represented the sets of complementary, dynamic and multidimensional capabilities needed among the various organization networks to achieve effective governance performance and successful information sharing. The findings of the authors were vital towards understanding the significant role of ICT and infrastructure development in establishing efficient government performance. Drawing on the conclusion of the authors, there was a greater capability in e-participation through information sharing as a mechanism for establishing the citizen participatory mechanisms. This study, however, was dissimilar to the current study as it failed to address the impacts of e-participatory mechanisms on the government performance.

### **Civic Education Structures**

Morse (2012) undertook a study on Citizens academies: Local governments building capacity for citizen engagement. This study adopted a descriptive research approach to analyze citizens' academies in the United States. The study also examined the practice of the various citizen academies by the local governments in the U.S. It drew from the original data collected on North Carolina citizens' academies and convenience program samples from other states. It also revealed more about what the program entailed, why they were offered, how they were conducted, and extents to which they are offered to local governments. The study also found out that most local governments had begun offering civic education programs as a way of creating awareness to the citizens on the participatory mechanism. The citizen's academy programs also taught residents about the local government functions and offered promises of developing more informed and better engaged citizenries. As a clear example of local

government investing in the civic education capacity building, the emergent practice of citizens' academies merits closer examination. The program material content analysis of the dataset indicated that the purposes and goals corresponded with community police academies' historical purposes and goals and great deals of consistency in the way programs would be organized. The study also found out that there would be variations in the extent to which purposes and goals would be pursued, from more basic public relations orientations to advanced, more substantive, capacity-building orientations. It also established that the civic education programs held significant potential regarding building community capacities for citizen participation.

#### **Information Dissemination Mechanisms**

Oduor (2015) conducted a study Review of status of public participation, and county information dissemination frameworks of Isiolo, Kisumu, Makueni and Turkana Counties established that meaningful citizen participation in governance is key public reform ingredient as instituted by the Constitution of Kenya. The study used primary and secondary methods for data collection. The primary data sources included interviews with Key Informants as officials and civil society representatives to establish information dissemination frameworks in the target counties. The interviews also sought to determine whether there existed Civil Society Organizations in the target counties that worked around governance and participation in county governance processes and whether there were organized CSO networks in the counties through which citizens would get involved in the governance processes. The Secondary data included Constitutional and governmental legal framework reviews aimed at facilitating efficient citizen participation and information dissemination frameworks. It included reviews of various documents developed by county governments as

Bills, policies, and Acts. In the study findings, it indicated that the power could be expressed through direct or indirect participation through elected representatives. He also noted that together, the legislative and constitutional provisions availed different citizen participation platforms in devolved county governance. The study established that Citizen participation was one of the national values and a principle of public service as articulated in the Constitution in Articles 10.2, a and Article 232,1. The study focused on Fostering Social Accountability in Devolved Governance implemented through the Institute of Economic Affairs Kenya. The study, therefore, reviewed the constitutional and legislative provisions public participation, identified frameworks, county government processes and platforms that facilitate public participation in government processes. The study further revealed that citizen participation and engagement in governance impacts hugely on the performance. Finally, the research identified the available information dissemination frameworks within the target counties. The study findings despite highlighting most aspects of citizen participation, unlike the current study which further lays the foundation for investigating the need to strengthen citizen participation as a means of improving governance performance.

#### **E-Petition**

Bochel, Bochel and Pool, (2015) conducted a study on Reaching in Scenario': The Potential for E-Petitions in Local Government. The study drew on case studies of petitions systems at local, national and devolved levels, including systems within the House of Commons, the Scottish and Wales' National Assemblies, Wolverhampton and Renfrewshire City Councils. The study also considered the extent to which e-petitions and petitions provided approaches which would allow the citizens to reach out to local government

authorities. The primary study was conducted in various stages between 2009 and 2012. Each case study was chosen to represent various levels of governments and different kinds of local authorities. The study established that there were risks and issues related with e-petitions as with most other citizen e-participation initiative. It also found out that most e-petition issues would also align with the every traditional approach to representative democracies. It would, therefore, be possible to disappoint the citizens, but, there would also be significant lessons that could be learned in regards to enabling the citizen voices and participation and helping to educate and inform the e-petitioners about decision making and local democracy. Despite tackling the basis of e-petitions among citizens in governance frameworks, this study, unlike the current, does not address the influence of e-petition on the performance of various governments.

### **Localism**

Lawton and Macaulay (2014) conducted a study on Localism in practice: Investigating citizen participation and good governance in local government standards of conduct. The study used a multiple case study approach to investigate phenomena across various organizations and development of different. This study examined how, against backgrounds of localism, there was an endorsement by the 2010 coalition government in the U.K of crucial governance and local integrity that was altered fundamentally. The Localism Act 2011 abolished the English local integrity frameworks, which was based on citizen participation in implementing local government conduct standards and policymaking. The use of the case study approach established how the standards committees determined the state of practices and processes within the local governance of integrity. The authors argued that standards committees played a fundamental role in the promotion of local

participation and encouraging good governance. The other finding indicated that contributions of every individual member of the public, it would be viewed that, by allowing direct public participation in the local standards committees, independent members would be transformed into expert citizens. These study gaps indicate the need for future research, to map the effects that would occur as a result of citizen participation in local standards committees, independent members undergoing substantial development until they exhibit behaviors of every-day makers and expert citizens. This study is also dissimilar to the current study as it does not address the impacts of localism on the performance of governments.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The Research study took the simple random and purposive research design. The target population consisted of Makueni county Ministries, The Public service board, constituencies, Sub-county wards. For the 10 County Ministries, 10 respondents were sampled from each ministry. These included the Ministry of Water, irrigation and Environment services, Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Education and ICT. Others included the ministry of Finance and Social – Economic Planning, Health services, Lands, Mining and physical planning, Roads, Transport and Infrastructure, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Tourism and Co-operatives and the ministry of Youth, Gender, sports and social services.

### **RESULTS**

#### **Influence of E-participation on performance of Makueni County**

E-participation, to a great extent explains the great differences that exist in governments' performances. The author sought to establish why such differences exist.

**Table 1: Results for Influence of E-participation on performance of Makueni County**

Statement	Strongly Agree%	Agree%	Disagree%	Strongly Disagree%
Lengthy and vigorous procedures to participate in policies and governance systems	17%	71%	6%	6%
Accessing county government citizen participatory opportunities	12	50	33	5
County e-governance adopting mechanisms and policies that involve citizen e-participation	0	61	39	0
Indications of preferences of interaction frameworks between citizens and the county e-governance	16	72	6	6
Equitable citizen e-participation opportunities	6	38	50	6
Lack of good policy and governance frameworks considering adequate citizen e-participation	11	45	33	11
Lack of information of the constitutional acts on public e-participation	0	78	17	5
Faced with infrastructural challenges as insufficient funds and literacy in ICT systems	22	67	11	0

Out of the 530 respondents, 71% agreed that they experience lengthy and vigorous procedures laid down for them to participate in policies and government systems. However, 17% strongly agreed that the procedures were quite lengthy and vigorous, indicating the high extent to which they felt the lengthiness and dynamism of the participation process, while a 6% disagreed and another 6% strongly disagreed that the procedures laid down for the participation were not prolonged procedures.

The 17% and 71 % of the respondents that strongly agreed and agreed respectively, form a majority of the respondents translating to 89% of them agreeing on the lengthy procedures involved to participate in policies. This shows that the county government system used to allow citizens to participate is not user-friendly and the processes involved are cumbersome.

The lengthy procedures of e-participation applications have a negative influence on the e-participants' motivation to participate in governance and consequently have a negative influence on the performance of the county.

It is worth noting that at least 50% of the respondents agreed to gaining access to the Makueni's county government citizen participatory opportunities. Even better, 12% of the respondents also strongly agreed to gain the access to such opportunities, which shows that the opportunities are readily available and easily accessible. This is a clear indication that this county government has the interest of giving access of e-participation to its citizenry at heart since 62% of the sample population admitted to gaining access to participatory opportunities. On the other hand, 33% of the sample population disagreed with the

statement that there is access to such opportunities, and a further 5% strongly disagreed. This shows that while some of the citizens are in a position to access the opportunities, others are at bay when it comes to accessing similar opportunities.

Again, 61% of the sample population did agree that Makueni County government has adopted mechanism and policies that involve citizen participation. This illustrates that most citizens have been actively involved in e-participation in the county. However, none of the informants strongly agreed to the adoption, which suggests that the adoption has not been brought out quite strongly. 39% disagreed with the statement that the county had adopted mechanisms and policies to have them participate in the governance electronically. This suggests that not enough publicity of the exercise was made by the local authorities.

Additionally, a whopping 72% of the informants indicated that they agreed with the existence of indications that showed preference of interaction frameworks between them as the citizens and the county e-governance. This means that although they were willing to engage in local issues related to their daily lives within their neighborhood but had a preferred method of use or a channel at their disposal that they felt was more convenient for them. Of more interest is that 16% strongly agreed on the indications bringing the agreement to a total count of 88%. The results of this emergent analysis revealed that they have specific preferred mode of interaction that they should constantly use in their participation for efficient decision making.

An overall response of 50% of the participants disagreed that e-participation opportunities were justifiably distributed to all. 6% strongly

disagreed with this statement. Both statistics confirmed their feeling excluded in the participation through just and fair opportunities. What this means is that such opportunities were beyond the reach of more than half of the citizens as they were within the reach to the minority. They felt that the opportunities led to the great satisfaction of a few members while the majorities were left disgruntled. On the other hand 38% of the respondents felt that participation opportunities were equitably distributed to all in the county. A further 6 % strongly agreed on the just distribution of opportunities and therefore were left feeling contented.

With regard to the existence of good policy and governance frameworks considering there being adequate citizen e-participation, 45% of the informants agreed and felt that this was missing in the county government. A further 11% strongly agreed that the government lacked good policies and government frameworks, the implication being that despite the citizenry participating electronically, they felt their opinions were not directly tied to public decision making. 33% disagreed on the absence of good policies and governance frameworks even with their participation. They felt that their participation had a positive impact in the creation of good policies and frameworks. An additional of 11% strongly disagreed on this, revealing that they completely felt their contribution was put into use and brought forth good results. They perceived that their influence in decision-making through their e-participation experiences led to reduced poor performance regarding public policy and programs hence showed positive assessment of governance.



At the same time the vast majority of citizens felt that the e-participation was carried out in their county while there was no know how or information on the citizenry constitutional acts on the public e-participation. This meant that being able to participate had no direct correlation with the constitutional knowledge and requirement of the participation. 78 % agreed that there was lack of constitutional knowledge, implying that such knowledge may not have been necessarily important as long as people participated. However, a minority of 17% disagreed that people had the constitutional knowledge and were further supported by 5% of the informants who strongly disagreed. This represents a small percentage of those with information at hand suggests that not enough publicity of the exercise was made by the local authorities.

At the same time, 67% of the respondents agreed that they were faced with infrastructural challenges such as insufficient funds and illiteracy in the ICT systems. This insight leads to Participation by the

citizenry facing resistance based on the costs of digital initiatives by the county government with regard to maximizing the participation and minimizing costs. 22% strongly agreed that they encountered such challenges. This could mean that the county government would be minimizing on costs while compromising the design of digital tools which influences the success of e-participation initiatives. Professionals tend to underline technical aspects mainly the ones tied to usability at the expense of the citizenry ease of use and democratic values such as transparency. However, 11% disagreed on the existence of any challenges in the sector.

#### **The Effects of E-Petition on performance of Makueni County**

Electronic petitions may offer an incremental step toward broader engagement with voters online and offers the potential benefit of encouraging voter participation.

**Table 2: Results for the Effects of E-petition on performance of Makueni County Government**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree%</b>	<b>Agree%</b>	<b>Disagree%</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree%</b>
Citizens well acquainted with e-petitions processes	11	50	28	11
Effective governments guidelines and clear standards that enhance citizen e-petition	11	16	62	11
Adequate human and financial resources that facilitate citizen e-petitionary mechanisms	5	33	46	16
Support the implementation of e-petitionary skills through technical expertise and capacity building	5	56	28	11
Awareness campaign initiatives to ensure citizens fully understand their e-participatory roles	0	56	28	16
Development and dissemination of citizen	0	56	33	11

guidelines on e-petition within the county governments				
Effective partnership between civil societies and counties for development of e-petition mechanisms	0	78	11	11

50% of the respondents do agree that the citizens are well acquitted with the e-petition processes. Thus, gets a further support by the 11% of the respondents who strongly agree with the statement. From the data in illustrated above, it was evident that although majorities were aware of the processes, others did not have a glimpse. 28% disagree that they are aware of the processes and an additional of 11% of the respondents strongly disagree of any information on the processes. 62% felt that there is lack of effective government guidelines and clear standards that are supposed to enhance the participation of citizens. This implied that the county government is yet to provide clear explanation of what the influence that the e-petition has, might comprise. This is yet to be made explicit. 11% are in total disagreement of any guidelines being provided. Some may even get to the extent of thinking that the administration's discretionary power can be frequently used to approve of formally inadmissible e-petitions.

On the contrary, 16% feel that the government has put in place guidelines and standards that are helpful to the citizenry, and an additional of 11% strongly feel that they are well informed by the government. . Moreover, the personal support and advice provided by the administration have positive effects on the overall acceptance and assessment of the e-petition system by the petitioners and yield positive effects on the government.

46% of the informants felt that there were inadequate human and financial resources available for the facilitation of e-petitions. This highly suggests that providing voters with direct participation in parliamentary processes can require a substantial investment. 16% of the interviewees

also felt that these resources lacked, with a higher intensity by strongly disagreeing. Few citizens, 5%, on the other hand, strongly agreed that there were adequate resources availed while a few more, 33%, moderately agreed that the e-petitioners mechanisms were well financed.

The more than a half fraction of the interviews disagreeing with the presence of adequate resources, do give a general picture of the relative cost effectiveness of investing in an e-petitions system as part of a strategy to encourage political engagement and participation. 56%, a vast majority of citizens agreed and felt that the e-participation carried out had received support in terms of the implementation of the e-petitionary skills either through technical expertise or capacity building. 5% also strongly agreed on being well equipped in the utilization of the e-petition. This level of confidence implied that the county government had provided technical support to enable petitioner success. 28% however disagree with the availability of technical support for skills building. This means that they had not comfortably make use of the petitionary mechanisms to realistic petitioner expectations. 11% strongly disagree on the existent of these expertises suggesting that there is no purely strategic action that is within their reach.

### **The Influences of Localism on the performance of Makueni County Government**

The research finding here endeavored to assess the levels of influence of localism on the county government in mention.

**Table 3: Results for the influence of Localism on the performance of Makueni County Government**

Statement	Strongly Agree%	Agree%	Disagree%	Strongly Disagree%
Need for county governance systems to establish individual citizen localism policies	50	50	0	0
County governments considering the citizens, requiring public justification on various decisions and localism	33	67	0	0
Localism policies are transparent to enable citizens to engage and understand the consideration of their input	34	46	20	0
Effective work provision guidelines across county government boundaries for civil societies and administration	29	66	5	0
Development of active processes based on the various localism policies	34	50	11	5
Effective support of citizen mobilization, training citizens, project and program technical oversights	28	61	11	0
Proper citizen involvement localism structures	27	46	16	11
Establishment of communication strategies within various county governments to enhance consistency and transparency	33	45	11	11

There was a general uniformed agreement on the need for the county government systems to establish individual citizen localism policies. The respondents agreed and strongly agreed on this statement with an equal measure of 50% respectively. The need exists in creating Localism policies to decentralize control to the lowest possible levels and to create a 'smaller government' or a 'big society'. This response reflects the commitment with which locals would like to see their local government presented with new freedoms.

The rationale is that this can stimulate innovation and offer better value for money, through lifting the hand of the central government control, making it possible for local authorities to work with and fund local activities. None of the respondents disagreed with the idea of the need to establish the localism policies. The localism perspective sees decision-making about the allocation of public resources as likely to be most creative, efficient and legitimate if

taking place as close as possible to those who are materially affected.

Another unanimous agreement was made on the idea that the county government should require public justification on the decisions it makes on localism. 67 % agreed that justification in the county activities should be sought from the citizenry. Additionally, 33% strongly agreed on the need for the county government to seek justification as well. Not a single respondent differed on the statement through a disagreement. These joint responses confirmed the powers that localism gives to local groups, to embark on a democratic process in which all the community can participate to shape the future of their locality, creating the need to ratify in some cases, by way of referendum requiring 51% support to be adopted.

46% of them agreed that the county government's policies were transparent and that enables them to engage and understand their input along with what it entails. 34% had a strong agreement on the

matter which shows that on the positive side, making localism work will depend on accountability and transparency of the systems in place. On the contrary, a 20% group of the respondents felt that the county had not come clean with them in terms of accountability and the openness of its processes. The implication here is that they felt they were left in the dark with regard to the happenings and processes of the county government and that transparency is the only means to address this. However, with the statistics generated, it shows the part of a wider transparency agenda that the government is seeking to implement across the public sector within the county government.

County governments have guidelines to inform them on how to effectively manage the various categories of public officers and offices in the county government's boundaries, for the civil society and administration. In their feedback, 66% of the respondents maintained that effective work provision guidelines influence the county's performance positively. 29% had a stronger perception of the positive influence created by the guidelines. Only 5% of the respondents were of the idea that effective policies do not create good impact, through disagreement of the statement.

### Effects of Civic Education Structures on the Performance of Makueni County Government

**Table 4: Results for Effects of Civic Education Structures on the Performance of Makueni County Government**

Statement	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree%	Strongly Disagree%
Civic educational structures have impacted the performance of county governments	61	39	0	0
County governance have enforced constitutional requirements for the success of decentralization	33	50	11	6
County governments conducting activities publicly and openly to facilitate citizen involvement	29	46	20	5
Effective public participation in the development of performance, planning, management and governance	21	67	6	6
Constitution promotes information access to the minority marginalized communities and groups	29	50	21	0
Governance systems developing various issues as redress mechanism for grievance to gaining citizen confidence	21	46	28	5
Effective planning processes within the county to aid engaging stakeholders, interest groups and citizens	45	10	45	0

There was optimism that civic education may had a significant impact on an individual's level of engagement with the political system, impacting

the performance of the county governments. 61% of the informants overwhelmingly strongly agreed that civic education plays a critical role. 39% also

agreed to this account. The role of active mobilization efforts stimulates individual political behavior where individuals participate not only because they possess the requisite socio-economic resources, but also because they are asked to participate, either by political parties, groups with which they are affiliated, family, friends, or others in their social networks.

It is imperative from the onset, to balance the needs of everyone to prevent the germination of new forms of social unrest and unhealthy competition. Devolution can only succeed if there are clearly defined reasons for its adoption accompanied by sound strategies in its implementation. 50% of respondents agree that county governance has enforced constitutional requirements for the success of decentralization. 33% does strongly agree on this, bringing those in agreement to 88%, an indication that the institutional structures that support the decentralization of authority are made formally and are inclusive. Despite this, 11% disagree and 6% strongly disagree implying that they have not experienced the enforcement.

Thus devolution, and indeed the entire Constitution must somehow, despite our differences, unite us to the extent that we all enjoy a shared political experience. The 2010 Constitution attempts to deal with the right to be different in an inclusive Kenya, how to tolerate difference whilst at the same time guaranteeing citizens' rights.

In light of the study objective, the research revealed that the county government should more or less ensure the population is aware of its own activities. 46% of the respondents agreed that the government conducts its activities publicly for them to get involved. 29% also strongly agreed on this point. However, 20% disagreed, meaning they felt they knew less of what was conducted by the government and could hardly participate, with 5%

strongly disagreeing on the awareness of such activities.

County governments should regularly post information on scheduled government activity sessions and taken decisions to ensure information on session dates and agenda are accessible. They can use notice boards at administrative buildings, TV plots and newspaper articles where local television stations operate and local newspapers are published.

Some county governments go to the extent of posting draft budgets on notice boards in their buildings and publishing posted budget announcements in the local press. Some publishers only draft budget in the local newspapers, while others only publish approved budget. Others may use a Web page or the Internet to post a draft budget. Some spread their draft budgets through a bulletin, instead of publishing draft budgets.

However, the degree of interest may be low on the part of citizenry, from the viewpoint of receiving public information. Locals may never have the initiative to request this kind of information. The terms established by law for requesting public information are rarely violated.

However, instances of delays in issuing public information may be experienced by locals from the county government, as majority of the respondents indicated that information about activities is processed and disseminated.

There is a high level of public participation in terms of performance, planning, management and governance as evidenced by the findings. 67% of those interviewed agreed to this fact with a further 1% of the respondents being in strong agreement.

However, 6% disagree on the matter while an extra 6% also strongly disagrees, implying ineffective public participation. This may be the case at times, attendance at county government sessions may be minimal due to

little interest and passiveness by the citizens. In this regard, citizens approach the governments with an appeal only when problems being

discussed are pertinent to their lives. Most public representatives are invited to interim working groups established at commissions.

**The effects of information Dissemination Mechanisms on the County Government of Makueni**

**Table 5: The results of the Effects of information Dissemination Mechanisms on the County Government of Makueni**

Statement	Strongly Agree%	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Information dissemination mechanisms would affect the performance of the county government significantly	28	72	0	0
Information dissemination mechanism and innovation provide vital opportunities for transforming public administration	21	61	18	0
Influence of information dissemination mechanism on expansion of communication channels for citizen engagement and empowerment	16	61	23	0
Information dissemination mechanisms and incorporation of electronic interactions of the citizens and governments and businesses and consumers	16	61	18	5
Information dissemination mechanisms and innovation improving the efficiency of public administrations across county governments	32	18	50	0
Effective collaborations across all governance agencies with significant development outcomes	18	50	32	0
Delivery of efficient, equitable and essential services to meet the needs of citizens, providing economic growth opportunities and facilitation of citizen participation	21	50	29	0
Information dissemination mechanisms also improve the environment for proper citizen engagement	29	50	21	0

72 % of the respondents agreed that the county government’s mechanism of disseminating information was likely to affect the performance of the county. This was backed up by 28% who strongly agree on the effect of the mechanisms. Effective and efficient mechanisms allow free flow of information and reduce communication barriers.

The County Government of Makueni had developed and passed the County Disclosure and Communications Policy 14 in September 2013. The Policy states that the County government is obligated to provide the public with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programmes, services and initiatives. It further states that the

county government is committed to providing timely, consistent and fair disclosure of County Government information to enable informed and orderly market decisions by investors and other interested parties. The document sets a broad framework for disclosure of County Government information to third parties through various communication platforms and channels. This policy is in harmony and in furtherance of the County Government values of respect to integrity.

Demands for greater accountability and transparency in government have merged with new technologies that make it much easier for governments to rapidly disseminate vast amounts of information. The result is that there is more public information at people's disposal than ever before. 61% of the respondents agree that public administration staves at transformation with this information dissemination mechanisms. 21 % strongly agree on the aspect although 18% do not believe that the mechanisms are bound to bring about change.

Citizens have access to more information following the expansion of communication channels, an impact of effective information dissemination mechanisms. While 23% of the respondents disagree with this expansion, a majority of 61% agrees and 16% strongly agree. This has created room for more citizen engagement and accordingly empowerment.

The central information office of the county government serves as the first stop for citizen queries about government services, and a clearing house for public information, This fulfills the obligation to not only make material available in a passive way, but also to actively disseminate information. The information helps citizens fulfill their legal and civic obligations (register to vote, pay taxes), conduct other business with the administration (renew a passport, apply for a drivers license), and become aware of laws, trends and facts that could affect their lives.

There is expanded use of Internet as a medium for communications between public officials and the citizenry. This has greatly improved the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration across county governments. This research confirmed this with 61%, more than half of respondents being in agreement and a further 16% strongly agreeing. Governments post ministerial decisions, draft policy proposals, enacted laws, licensing and tax forms, sector-specific information, health and safety advice, citizen guides, and contact information for government departments on to the Internet.

On the contrary, some of the respondents negate this statement. 5% strongly disagree while 18 % disagree on the improvement of public administrations. The implication here is that they do not have access to such mechanisms or are not actively involved.

**The Levels in which citizen participation has improved the performance of Makueni County Government**

**Table 6: Results of the Levels in which citizen participation has improved the performance of Makueni County Government**

Statement	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%
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Improved access to universal health facilities has enhanced the performance of county governments significantly	83	17	0	0
Increased employment opportunities for locals has transformed the economic status of the residents in the county governments	54	23	23	0
Improved public access to financial opportunities has empowered citizens and enhanced development in the counties	66	17	17	0
County governments have enhanced access to education opportunities and citizen empowerment programs	61	28	11	0
Transformation of lives has been enhanced through devolution and introduction of county governments	54	39	7	0
Key laws and regulations have been adopted to enhance effectiveness in development at the county level	66	17	17	0
County governments have attracted high level of partnerships and investments at the local level in the last 5 yrs	66	24	5	5
The economic potential of local residents has been improved through the county governments	61	28	11	0

83% of the respondents strongly agreed that access to universal health care has brought increased performance. 17 % are also in agreement. 66% of respondents strongly agree that improved public access to financial

opportunities has empowered locals to enhance development. Additionally, 17% also agreed on this although a further 17% disagreed with the statement.

### Human Development Index Factors that County Governments Should Focus On

**Table 7: Results for HDI Factors that the county governments should focus on**

Factor	Response	Percentage Focus
Health	0	0



Income	0	0
Education	0	0
Health & Income	30	6
Health & Education	235	44
Income & Education	30	6
Health, Income & Education	235	44

44% of the respondents felt that Health and Education are the factors that should be given priority by the county governments, yet another 44% of the respondents felt that Health, Income and Education are what need most priority by the county governments. 6% also felt that Health and Income were the most basic factors to be prioritized and another 6 % also felt that Income and Education were the most basic factors. The respondents in answering whether the three Human Development Factors were tied together, 56% affirmed the interdependence of the factors by a percentage of 76 – 100%. A further 22% of the respondents were convinced that the factors were interconnected by 51 -75%. None of the respondents felt that there was co-existence between the factors. 16% expressed the interconnection by 1 – 25% while the remaining 5% of respondents thought the connection could be best rated at 26 – 50%. Seeking Educational interventions to strengthen these skills is important, especially to children to refine these skills and sharpen their mental ability. In agreement to this, 56% of the respondents thought that a child should attend school from an early age of 1 – 5 years, indicating the importance of developing early learning interventions. 11% had the opinion that the age most suitable for a child is 5 – 8 years and a further 5% thought it best 9 -12 years. However, 28% thought 12 -15 years age was appropriate for initiating learning. 56% of the respondents, on a scale of Very True, agree that Well Being is shown through income, health and education. 39% agree on a scale of True, while

the remaining 5% agree that it is Somewhat True that well being is a product of the three HDI Factors. Economic well-being mitigates negative views of anti – corruption and poor performance. The kinds of economic well-being might affect people's satisfaction with the government's anti-corruption enforcement.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

Members of the County participate in County governance systems, and the participation, has greatly increased the performance of the county government through improved access to basic amenities, financial opportunities and citizen empowerment among others.

Institutional factors such as lack of effective guidelines, formal procedures and clear standards on the role of the citizens in their participation, lacks adequate resources- human and financial that facilitate the process of citizen participation, lack of proper channels for feedback and association of public inputs, poor public administration and bad governance, and outdated structures, contribute to reduced citizen participation.

The study also concludes that Human Development Index factors; health, income and education where ill health, poverty and lack of education respectively are a hindrance and therefore demotivating factors in determining the level of participation in governance by members of the county.

The study further concludes that individual related factors such as ignorance, lack of

individual interest and initiative, lack of time, communication barriers and lack of confidence on the county leadership hinder their participation in governance.

The study finally concludes that socio-cultural factors such as poor distribution of resources, poverty, illiteracy, age barriers and gender stereotypes negatively influence the participation of the public in public governance.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommended that more awareness be created among the members of the public. Effective guidelines, formal procedures and clear standards on the role of the citizens in their participation should be availed to the public. This will encourage their participation in governance as they will know the importance of participation and ways by which they can participate.

The study also recommended that County government should invest in institutional factors that improve the efficiency of public administration and allow fully and equitable involvement of members of the public in the citizen-centered county governance systems.

The study further recommended that the county government should be accountable for the County resources by eliminating

corruption, tribalism and nepotism and ensuring equal distribution accordingly, eliminating economical and social inequalities. This will change the attitude of the people towards participating in governance as it will reflect true and fair allocation of resources and opportunities.

The study finally recommended that members of the public should be enlightened to change their attitude towards participation in governance and create will and time to participate. Their participation will allow the incorporation of their views for the betterment of lives.

### **Recommendations for areas of further research**

The study was only limited to the county of Makueni, to only assess the influence of citizen participation in governance. The researcher therefore recommends that another study be done to assess the challenges facing the County governments in involving members of the public in governance which was not the concern of this study.

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